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**Structural and Cultural Determinants of Fertility and Female
Labour Market Participation in Italy and Europe**

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Introduction

This thesis addresses the main determinants of declining fertility rates in OECD countries, with a specific focus on the Italian situation characterized by low fertility as well as low female labour market participation rates. It attempts to assess to what extent the specific Italian and Southern European pattern may be due to the effects of “structural”, i.e. economic circumstances and institutional opportunities and constraints, and “cultural” factors, i.e. social norms, values and preferences shaping the labour market and family behaviours. This is a very interesting and challenging research question, as it has been recently claimed how neither the “institutionalist” nor the “culturalist” approaches alone can sufficiently explain cross-country differences in women’s employment (Steiber and Haas, 2012). Nevertheless, such an effort is made difficult by theoretical as well as methodological shortcomings, the latter being partly a consequence of the former.

It should be recognized how the sociological literature concerned with family behaviours has paid relatively little attention to integrating those two explanatory domains in a coherent theoretical framework. For instance, authors concerned with the effects of institutional settings in comparative studies on the reconciliation of work and family duties often neglect the role of the unobserved cultural differences which may work behind, and interact with, the effects of social and family policies¹. Often, the latter were just “operationalized” as single countries or country clusters, making the interpretation of micro-level mechanisms across countries even trickier in light of possible effects of heterogeneous values and preferences across them. On the other hand, especially within the sociological field, “culture” became the domain of interest of a stream of qualitative research which has been referred to as “cultural studies”. The latter has been strongly criticized for the “naivety” of the epistemological approach and the lack of empirical rigour (Goldthorpe, 2007), while the quantitative sociological field concerned with the study of inequality and the life-course widely accepted a rational choice perspective (*ibidem*; see also the special issue of the *European Sociological Review* on rational choice theory, 1996).

If the “alliance” between quantitative methods and methodological individualism has proven to be a very useful analytical strategy, it also entailed that “culture” more and more became a residual category, so that alternative explanatory mechanisms relying on social norms and preferences have been crowded out (Edling, 2000). Only recently the importance of integrating the standard socioeconomic analyses of labour market and family behaviours with

¹ From now on, and throughout the whole thesis, with reconciliation of “work and family duties” I refer to the problems created by labour market participation of both partners within families with children in the age where care is needed.

the cultural explanans has been reassessed (in demography, see Liefbroer and Billari, 2010; in economics, see Guiso et al., 2006). This is not to say that all the sociological literature disregarded to emphasize the role of normative aspects to understand family behaviours². It is argued that, among those sociologists who decided to focus their attention on the role of institutional settings and their effects in shaping life-course inequalities, the need for an *integration* of these “structural” factors with “cultural” ones has been almost completely neglected, as, for instance, Steiber and Haas (2012) report in their literature review³.

The decreasing consideration of the role of values and preferences has been translated in a general lack of those “soft” measures in most of the available longitudinal datasets commonly used for “structural” sociological research. Therefore, apart from the absence of a cultural dimension in the standard theoretical framework applied to the issue of work and family reconciliation, additional difficulties for the general aim here arise from the need to use proxies for values and attitudes. Since rich longitudinal data are lacking, it has proven to be difficult to integrate in a single empirical analysis both structural and cultural factors and their interactions. The strategy followed here has been to separate the theoretical and empirical analyses into different sections, devoted either to “structural” or “cultural” explanations, although the end of each chapter and the concluding section try to reassemble the pieces of the empirical puzzle to shed some light on the wider research questions.

The first chapter presents the theoretical background concerning the reconciliation of work and family duties that may help to understand the Italian and Southern European pattern of low female labour market participation and fertility. In the first part of the chapter, the “standard” approach based on the Economic Theory of the Family (ETF, Becker, 1991) is dealt with. According to ETF, increased female educational attainment and labour market participation play a crucial role in explaining the historical trend of postponement of childbearing and decrease in Total Fertility Rates observed in most of OECD countries. On this point Billari et al. (2006: 5) wrote that “given the consistency of the various findings in the literature, trends in female education can be seen as a major force shaping the postponement of childbearing in Europe”. With the increased opportunity-costs of childrearing (McDonald, 2000; Heckman and Walker, 1990), it is not surprising that fertility rates have fallen in all the OECD countries, also because women, employed or not, are still burdened with most of childcare and domestic chores (Steiber, 2007). Moreover, in the last twenty years the lowering effects of increasing educational

² Maybe the most widely studied phenomenon which proved to be hardly explained by standard “economic” approaches is the division of domestic housework, as it will be discussed in the first chapter.

³ Some relevant exceptions again relate to gender equality and the division of childcare and housework (see, for instance, the research project supervised by Daniela Grunow concerning the effects of gender norms on the gendered division of paid and unpaid work across institutional settings, <http://apparent-project.com/index.html>).

attainment on fertility rates have been worsened by rising difficulties in finding a stable employment due to the economic pressures of the fordist crisis and economic tertiarization (for Italy, Barbieri and Scherer, 2009; Steiber, 2007; Blossfeld et al., 2005; Caldwell and Schindlmayr, 2003).

However, in the literature there is clear evidence that both the effects of increased female labour market participation and employment instability are shaped by welfare regimes (Blossfeld et al., 2005; Esping-Andersen, 1999, 1990). On the one hand, cross-country analyses confirmed that reconciliation of work and family duties is easier in both Socialdemocratic and Liberal models, less in the Conservative and, above all, in the Mediterranean welfare model (Del Boca and Wetzels, edited by, 2007; Sleafos, 2003; Esping-Andersen, 1999). This has been claimed to explain the well-known finding of a positive cross-national correlation between female labour market participation and fertility rates (*ibidem*; Ahn and Mira, 2002). On the other hand, the postponement of the transition to parenthood due to precarious labour market careers is more extensive in the Conservative and Mediterranean models (Barbieri, edited by, forthcoming; Kreyenfeld, 2010; Schmitt, 2008; Baizán, 2005; Bernardi and Nazio, 2005; De la Rica and Iza, 2005).

This macro-micro theoretical framework, which integrates Becker's micro-economics and the institutional framework of different welfare regimes, has been widely used to understand the historical pattern of family behaviours and cross-national differences. Based on this, the first chapter formulates some theoretical predictions on how micro-level variables connected with social stratification influence reproductive behaviours and female labour market participation around childbirths in different institutional settings, which are applied to the Italian case in the second chapter⁴. Here longitudinal data are used to study the transition to the first child in Italy, separately among men and women and across different birth cohorts, as well as female labour market participation around childbirths. The chapter shows how micro-level mechanisms in Italy are coherent with a *familialistic* institutional setting (Esping-Andersen, 1999) – virtual absence of public provisions of childcare for children aged less than three, labour market rigidity and limited availability of part-time jobs – which fosters the male breadwinner norm. In such an environment, reducing fertility has been the only means by which (highly educated) women have been able to raise their labour market participation and become more independent from their partners' resources.

However, a merely institutional and structural explanation of the findings of this chapter may leave out relevant arguments. For instance, why has female labour market participation in

⁴ In the first and the second chapter, female labour market participation is analysed within a time-span covering few months before and several years after the month of first and higher-order childbirths.

Italy been so persistently low across cohorts, net of educational attainment, around the period of the birth of the first child, irrespective of the number of children ever had? Many women do not participate in the labour market, and being a housewife is positively correlated with fertility, so why then has the fertility rate been so low in Italy between the '70s and the first half of the '90s? Moreover, why are fertility rates increasing after 1995, exactly in a period of rising economic uncertainty and labour market flexibilization? Are these findings exclusively explained by economic constraints and lack of institutional support toward families or might some features of the normative structure of Italian society help understand this Italian (and, to some extent, Southern European) pattern?

Therefore, the second part of the first theoretical chapter introduces some literature dealing with the “cultural” dimension underlying female labour market participation and fertility. It is argued that the theory of the Second Demographic Transition and the analytical distinction between countries characterized by “strong” and “weak” family ties (Reher, 1998; for theoretical and empirical applications aimed at explaining Italian low fertility see Giuliano, 2007; Dalla Zuanna and Micheli, 2004; Dalla Zuanna, 2001) should be combined with the “structural” arguments already discussed for a better understanding of the Italian pattern of low fertility and female labour market participation.

First of all, besides, but also driven by, the increase in women’s educational attainment and labour market participation, other authors have stressed the role of changed preferences toward children to achieve full life-satisfaction to understand trends toward low fertility. This argument is at the core of the Second Demographic Transition (SDT) thesis (Lesthaeghe, 1995; Van de Kaa, 1987; Lesthaeghe and Van de Kaa, 1986), which considers the shift toward “post-materialist” values (Inglehart, 1977) one of the main causes of the decrease in fertility rates. Some authors even claimed that “the reproduction of the species is not easily compatible with advanced industrial society” (Caldwell and Schindlmayr, 2003: 257), as couples and individuals desire to develop a more individualized lifestyle, where having children becomes one of many possible choices (Van de Kaa, 2004). In short, “the basic idea is that new Western marital and fertility patterns cannot be interpreted without starting from changes in mentality. In fact, as data for Western countries show, the orientation toward post-materialism increases cohort by cohort and this new pattern of values encourages cohabitation, low fertility and couple dissolution” (Dalla Zuanna, 2001: 153)⁵.

⁵ Although the idea of a continuing trend might apply to some important correlates of the process of social change which falls under the definition of “post-materialist shift”, such as the processes of secularization and equalization of gender attitudes, it is debatable if post-materialist attitudes in the original Inglehart’s operativization follows the same trend, especially after the '90s. While this issue will be discussed more in detail later in this work, suffice it to say that those demographic behaviours, e.g. cohabitations and divorces, which were originally linked to the post-materialist shift, as mentioned in the

The hypothesis of a SDT has been discussed in many papers (see, for a more recent appraisal, Lesthaeghe, 2010; Surkyn and Lesthaeghe, 2004) but it is difficult to assess its real explanatory power, not only because the correlation between values, attitudes and behaviours entails causal flows from the former to the latter and vice versa, but also because there are serious measurement problems involved⁶. Since “secularization” has been interpreted as a crucial process of value change within the post-materialist shift (Inglehart and Norris, 2004), one way of operationalizing family values has been to assess the fertility impact of religious affiliation and beliefs (Zhang, 2011; Philipov and Berghammer, 2007; Adsera, 2006; Brañas-Garza and Neuman, 2006; Ongaro, 2001). The results from this area of research almost unanimously indicate that religious beliefs and church attendance, with significant cross-country variation, are strong predictors of both family ideals and behaviours, for religion has a crucial role in guiding human behaviour in terms of the function and the “right” size of families. In light of such arguments, it is worth giving an additional look at the Italian data, as they might contribute to explain the strong connection between marriage and parenthood, the slow diffusion of cohabitations, separation and divorces as well as differences, at least until the end of the ‘90s, in North and South Italian fertility rates.

In addition to religiosity and its implications for family behaviours, another crucial dimension of cultural change which might have had a relevant impact on the issue of reconciliation of work and family duties is related to attitudes toward the traditional gender roles. The latter has been found to be an important predictor of female labour market participation (Fernández and Fogli, 2009, 2006). In this respect, the new field of “cultural economics” (Guiso et al., 2006) made important progress not limited to add to the usual models of reproductive behaviours and female labour market participation some proxies for individual preferences as control variables, but aimed at assessing the exogenous role of “culture” as a non-redundant factor affecting many economic outcomes. Results from this stream of research have often showed how values and preferences may be as important as standard socioeconomic variables (Fernández and Fogli, 2009; Fernández et al., 2004). Moreover, cultural economics developed some methodologies, increasingly shared within the discipline, to assess the causal impact of values and preferences on family outcomes, especially as far as cross-country comparisons are concerned. Apart from relying on religiosity as a fundamental source of variation in values and beliefs across nations (Guiso et al., 2006), following Max Weber’s

quote by Dalla Zuanna and shown empirically by Lesthaeghe and Surkyn (2004), do seem to increase cohort by cohort in basically all Western countries, although with different paces (Lesthaeghe, 2010).

⁶ In the first chapter it is argued that, to some extent, the existence of empirical evidence showing a high degree of stability of values and attitudes over the life-cycle reinforces the idea of the latter’s causal effects on behaviours (de Graaf et al., 1989).

classical works on the economic consequences of religions (1921), those authors developed an epidemiological approach. The latter is based on ethnic variation in values and the use of migration histories, with a focus on second generation migrants to avoid selection problems, as an exogenous source of cultural differentiation in the host countries (Fernández, 2007).

The third chapter presents the results of an empirical attempt to show the relevance of preferences on demographic behaviours using a similar epidemiological strategy as an interpretative key, applied to internal Italian migrations. It studies the transitions to marriage, the first and the second child of Italian men, disentangling behaviours of Southerners, Northerners and South-to-North migrants, distinguishing the 1 and 1.5 generations of migrants. The main findings corroborate the important role of structural opportunities and constraints as well as social norms. Indeed, the idea that Southern Italian men's higher marriage and fertility rates – at least among the observed birth cohorts – can be imputed to their family preferences is confirmed, while the North-South difference in the timing of the transition to first child, which is strongly influenced by men's economic stability, may be due primarily to their wives' different labour market participation.

Relying on the heterogeneity in values and preferences across time and space may help to understand why fertility has declined and female labour market participation has increased at different paces across countries. A comparative analysis of trends and patterns of religiosity and gender attitudes is presented in the fourth chapter, based on three waves of the European Values Study (EVS, 1990, 2000 and 2008). Here, taking care of the important issue of measurement invariance (Davidov et al. 2008a, 2008b; Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998; Byrne et al., 1989), I present evidence of huge variation across countries in their levels of religiosity and gender attitudes. Moreover, more religious and gender-unequal societies, coherently with their traditional orientations, have lower female labour market participation, but they also have lower fertility rates. This paradox is reinforced by the finding that religiosity is more strongly related to fertility at the micro-level precisely in more traditional countries. This finding is robust to many sensitivity checks, including also instrumental variable regressions using adherence to religious dogmas and migrations histories as sources of exogenous variation in religiosity.

So, if the third and the fourth empirical chapters integrate the second one suggesting that values and preferences matter in explaining trends in female labour market participation and fertility, how do they contribute to explain the question raised at the end of the second chapter, i.e. to understand Italian and Southern European pattern of low fertility and female participation? The last chapter of the thesis presents a theoretical and empirical comparison between Italy and the Netherlands, based on the same data and concepts of the previous comparative section. The comparison is interesting because the two countries were

characterized for a long time by a very similar institutional and cultural setting, but in the last three decades the Netherlands underwent several changes in both the “structural” and “cultural” domains. The chapter shows how the Netherlands experienced a much sharper decrease of religiosity and traditional gender attitudes which translated in higher increases in female labour market participation across periods. Moreover, I also show that Dutch women employed part-time as well as housewives have much higher fertility rates than their Italian counterparts, despite their more “modern” cultural orientation. This is additional evidence of the Italian “paradox” of high traditionalism in values and low fertility.

To assess this finding we are brought back to the same question: should this be explained solely by economic factors and features of the institutional settings? While the latter are certainly very important, my interpretation is that it is well possible for some social conditions, which foster traditional attitudes and values, to be negatively correlated with fertility rates. This argument can not be directly illustrated in the thesis, but the results are coherent with such an interpretation, which draws deeply on the theoretical distinction between “strong” and “weak” family ties (Reher, 1998). Such a distinction, which recalls other sociological concepts like the one of “familism” (Banfield, 1958), has been used not only as a proxy for preferences toward family and children (Alesina and Giuliano, 2010), but also to explain the diffusion of those institutional settings fostering, or inhibiting, the reconciliation between work and family duties (Alesina et al., 2010; Algan and Cahuc, 2005) and to account for low fertility rates in Italy and Southern Europe (Giuliano, 2007; Dalla Zuanna and Micheli, 2004; Dalla Zuanna, 2001).

Within the framework provided by the strong-weak family concept, not only social and family policy options are endogenous with respect to family structures, but strong family systems may have also *direct* negative effects on fertility. Generally speaking, in Italy, as well as other Southern European countries, the size of the family may not be necessary related to the value attached to children (Santow and Bracher, 1999). Accordingly to the well-known quality-quantity trade-off (Becker, 1991), “familistic” parents may decide to reduce their fertility in order to ensure high levels of well being for their offspring and to promote their social mobility (Dalla Zuanna, 2001). The latter and other mechanisms behind the link strong families-low fertility will be discussed several times both in the theoretical and empirical sections of my thesis. For instance, if traditional countries consider marriage the only accepted path toward parenthood, extra-marital births, which in recent years constitute large part of the fertility gap between Northern and Southern Europe (Kohler et al., 2006), will be strongly stigmatized. At the same time, the very limited and recent diffusion of cohabitations is an additional factor behind the latest-late age at leaving home typical of Southern European countries (Billari et al.,

2001), which is not only due to economic uncertainty, but also to different age norms on leaving home (Aassve et al., 2010; Billari and Liefbroer, 2007).

It is suggestive that in Southern Italy, long-time a demographic reservoir, fertility rates have declined to a level where in the last years some Northern regions have higher fertility rates (Del Boca and Rosina, 2009). A related phenomenon is the higher incidence of cohabitations, extra-marital births and matrimonial instability which are greater in the North than in the South of Italy (Billari, 2008). At the same time, Northern regions also experienced important immigration flows and many immigrants from Middle-East, North Africa and Latin America tend to stick to rather traditional family values, as shown in the fourth chapter. But, of course, Northern Italian regions are also the most economically advanced (Castiglioni and Dalla Zuanna, 2009), the ones where the negative consequences of labour market precariousness are less severe (Paggiaro et al., 2009; Barbieri and Scherer, 2005) and where institutional settings, especially thanks to public childcare for children aged less than three as well as part-time employment, are more favourable to work and family reconciliation (Del Boca and Rosina, 2009; Del Boca, 2002).

So, the links between economic, institutional and cultural factors are at the heart of the different patterns of fertility and female labour market participation not only when comparing Italy and Northern Europe, but also comparing Northern and Southern regions within Italy.

The work is organized as follows. The first chapter introduces the theoretical background useful for the following empirical analyses, devoting its first part to a “structural” discussion based on the Economic Theory of the Family and the micro-mechanisms behind female labour market participation and fertility across different welfare regimes. The second part of the first chapter is instead related to the literature which studied the role of “cultural” factors underlying the issue of the work-family reconciliation. Theoretical arguments and empirical evidence from the Second Demographic Transition, cultural economics and the authors stressing the analytical distinction between strong and weak family ties are presented and discussed.

The second chapter presents the first empirical analyses and applies to Italy the theoretical framework based on the “structural” perspective developed in the first part of the theoretical chapter. After discussing the results of the longitudinal analyses of the transition to parenthood and female labour market participation over the life-cycle, based on ILFI data (1997-2005), I conclude with some open questions which suggest a relevant role of the cultural dimension in understanding the Italian pattern of fertility and female labour market participation. Using the same longitudinal data, the third chapter introduces the issue of the role of preferences *vis-à-vis* economic constraints in reproductive behaviours, adopting an

epidemiological strategy as an interpretative key, applied to South-to-North internal migration histories.

The fourth chapter enlarges the perspective and aims at studying levels, patterns of value change and the impact of those on female labour market participation and fertility in a selection of 15 European countries using the EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008). Finally, the fifth chapter uses the same data but focuses on a comparison between Italy and the Netherlands, which is interesting in many respects when comparing the role of cultural and structural factors underlying demographic behaviours.

Each chapter is introduced by a brief summary of the topics treated and the main empirical findings. The thesis ends with a discussion of the main results and their implications for the literature and future studies on the topic of work-family reconciliation.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

Summary

In this chapter the main structural and cultural arguments concerning the link between fertility and female labour market participation and its evolution will be introduced. The latter will constitute the theoretical foundation of the analyses presented in the subsequent empirical chapters. In the first part of the chapter, a “structural” approach to work-family reconciliation based on the Economic Theory of the Family (ETF) will be presented, connecting women’s educational attainment with rising opportunity costs of childbearing. The focus will be on the ways different welfare regimes, considered as acting exogenously, shape the micro-level consequences of the ETF, thus producing different cross-country outcomes at the macro-level in terms of female labour market participation and fertility rates. In fact, in the last decades those countries which were able to implement a set of social and family policies aimed at fostering the reconciliation of work and family duties have been able to reach higher levels of both female labour market participation and fertility. Joining the arguments of the ETF with the welfare regimes theory allows to derive a set of hypotheses concerning how men’s and women’s educational and economic resources influence the transition to parenthood and female labour market participation around childbirths across different institutional settings.

In the second part of the chapter the cultural explanations of declining fertility and rising female labour market participation will be introduced. These arguments have been suggested by different streams of the literature, but it is mainly referred here to the Second Demographic Transition (SDT) thesis and the analytical distinction between “strong” and “weak” family ties. First of all, the endogeneity of social and family policies with respect to different national family cultures will be discussed. Then, the chapter will shift to the micro-level describing how cultural orientations such as the attitudes toward gender roles, religiosity and post-materialism might help explaining long-term trends in fertility and female labour market participation. It is argued that if “traditional” values are correlated with high marital stability and fertility as well as low female labour market participation and those values have declined across cohorts, the former might well constitute additional explanatory factors to understand the rise of cohabitations, extra-marital births, marital instability and sub-replacement fertility.

In addressing these different streams of the literature, the chapter focuses on the limitations of both structural and cultural arguments, for none of them alone is able to explain recent fertility and female labour market participation trends. It is particularly difficult to understand why exactly those countries where new family forms and female labour market participation, fostered by post-materialist values, secularization and modern attitudes toward gender roles, are much more widespread are also those with higher fertility rates. This is certainly to be related to the role of those institutional settings fostering the conciliation of work and family duties and their endogeneity with respect to national cultures. But it will be argued how direct and negative effects of traditional values on fertility rates may also be hypothesized. To understand the mechanisms underlying the latter, the chapter refers to the analytical distinction between strong and weak family ties. There is in fact empirical evidence suggesting that the pattern of latest-late age at leaving home is influenced by family preferences. Another sign of the strength of family ties is the very late diffusion of cohabitation and extra-marital births, which nowadays contribute to a large extent to explain fertility differences between Northern and Southern Europe.

As an example of the need to take into account the interrelations between structural and cultural factors, it will be shown how more culturally and economically advanced regions of Italy and Spain are experiencing, in the last 15 years, a slow but constant trend of increase in fertility rates, mainly driven by extra-marital births, migration flows – i.e. cultural factors – as well as more family-friendly institutional environments.

1.1 A “Structural” and Comparative Perspective on Trends and Mechanisms Underlying Female Labour Market Participation and Fertility

1.1.1 Low fertility in light of the Economic Theory of Family

Fertility started to decline within the end of the 19th century in most of the early industrialized Western countries (Newson and Richerson, 2009). Usual explanations for the beginning of the demographic transition are the rising opportunity-costs of children due to higher return to human capital and the quantity-quality trade-off (Becker, 1991), rising social security for old age (Caldwell, 1976; for recent years, see Billari and Galasso, 2009; Boldrin et al., 2005) and declining child mortality (Doepke, 2005; Kalemli-Ozcan, 2003). After a temporary stop of the process of declining fertility rates, the baby-boom generation which followed the 2nd World War, all OECD countries again experienced a sharp decline in Total Fertility Rates (TFRs). This stage of the demographic transition, and its different causes, constitutes the focus of my thesis.

The stylized facts underlying the first demographic transition which I mentioned seem to suggest how “structural” factors, both at the micro- and macro-levels, constitute a crucial dimension to be investigated for a better understanding of recent trends in fertility behaviours. That is why the first section of the chapter will present a “structural” approach to work-family reconciliation based on the Economic Theory of the Family (ETF), connecting women’s educational attainment with rising opportunity costs of childbearing. The focus will be on the ways different welfare regimes shape the micro-level consequences of the ETF, thus producing different cross-country outcomes at the macro-level in terms of female labour market participation and fertility rates. It should be clarified that in this first section it is assumed that welfare regimes play an exogenous role in shaping the mentioned micro-level mechanisms. Moreover, no other mechanisms but women’s higher economic independence are assumed to influence the new family behaviours such as cohabitations, separations and divorces. Although the limitations of the ETF when it comes to an interpretation of some new findings such as the positive effects of both partners’ educational attainment on fertility will be addressed, no other factors but those related to social and family policies will be discussed here. These strong assumptions are useful, from an analytical point of view, because they allow for precise theoretical predictions which will be tested in the following empirical chapter. Nevertheless, the limitations of a mere “structural” approach and the need to integrate other explanatory factors to understand declining fertility rates and increasing female labour market participation will be addressed in the second part of the chapter.

Starting from this “structural” standpoint, some well-known socioeconomic processes, basically common to all OECD countries, deal with the transition from the fordist to the post-fordist mode of production (Esping-Andersen, 1999) and the longer and longer (female) permanence in the educational system. In the last years, women’s educational attainment has reached, and overcome in many countries, the male one (Esping-Andersen, 2009)⁷. These processes have determined a rapid growth of female labour market participation that, given the prevalence of a specific gendered division of paid and unpaid work within families, brought to the decrease of fertility rates and the developing of new behaviours within the family domain such as increasing divorces and cohabitation rates.

In fact, during the last decades the industrialized countries witnessed a steady and, in some countries, dramatic increase in the female labour market participation paralleled by a dramatic change in family formation behaviour: many couples delay or limit childbearing or decide not to have children at all (Steiber, 2007). Fig. 1 shows trends in female labour market participation and fertility rates from the early 1970s to the middle 1990s in the main OECD countries. It has been argued how the low fertility rates in OECD countries do not correspond to people’s desires (D’Addio and Mira D’Ercole, 2005) and have given rise to concerns about the future imbalance of the population age structure and the sustainability of the welfare systems, since there will be fewer young adults to care for elderly family members (Neyer, 2003). Moreover, pensions and healthcare will take up an increasing amount of public spending (*ibidem*).

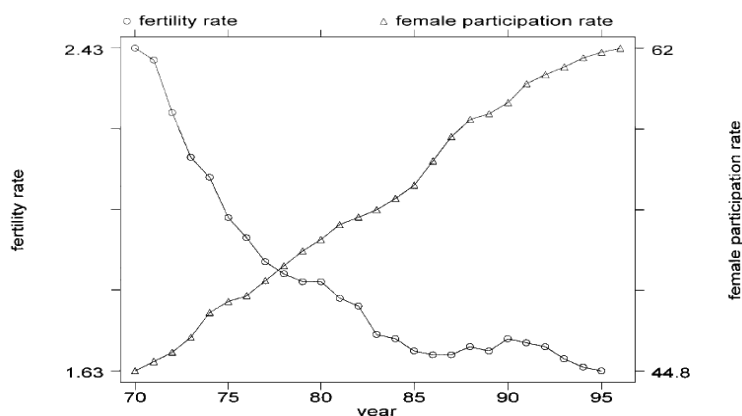
As mentioned, to explain these enormous changes, it has been proven empirically useful to refer to the Economic Theory of the Family (ETF, Becker, 1991) and to the literature aiming to find explicative mechanisms at the micro- (individual) and meso- (familiar) levels. In this perspective, fertility rates decrease for both the net effect of the a) *postponement of the transition to childhood*, especially the increase of women’s age at the first birth (Gustaffson and Kenjoh, 2007; Steiber, 2007; Neyer, 2003; Sleenbos, 2003), and the b) *increase in female earning potential in the labour market*, for the latter has increased the opportunity-costs of the time spent out of the labour market (Becker, 1991).

According to Becker’s specialization model (*ibidem*), due to their higher investments in human capital useful for family activities, women are expected to schedule their work and family roles sequentially over the life course, leaving their job for the childrearing and returning in the labour market when the children grow older. The division of labour in the households when children are in the age where care is needed implies that wives concentrate on full-time

⁷ Even if gender segregation in higher education is still strong and have important consequences in terms of occupational vertical and horizontal segregation of women in the labour market (Barone, 2011).

homemaking and childrearing while husbands work full-time in the labour market. With the increased opportunity costs of childrearing, it is not surprising then that fertility rates have fallen in all the OECD countries, especially because what has not changed is that women, employed or not, still tend to perform more household and childcare work than men (Steiber, 2007)⁸.

Fig. 1 Average fertility and female labour market participation rate in the main OECD countries



Source: Ahn and Mira (2002).

As the utility of marriage for women tends to decrease, consequences of their higher labour market participation rates are the spread in cohabitations and the increasing marital instability. For Becker, all these are signals of the crisis of family as a social institution (1991). Female participation, fertility and divorce rates are highly interconnected and c) *fertility decreases also due to the diffusion of new family models and especially when divorce becomes more likely*. In turn, female participation tends to increase if divorce rates do as well because the higher independence from men’s resources makes even more necessary for women to protect themselves from economic uncertainty (*ibidem*).

Coming back to the core correlation in Fig. 1, it has to be added that the tertiarization of western economies, in the wider context of the globalization process, is connected with rising difficulties in finding a stable employment (Raab et al., 2008; Blossfeld et al., 2005). Therefore, most of the “structural” explanations of the decrease in fertility rates stressed the role of d) *more unstable employment careers and the economic uncertainties connected with them*, well represented by the spread of youth unemployment rates and the labour market flexibilization processes which started during the 1980s in many European countries (Barbieri, edited by,

⁸ The persistence of such a gendered pattern of division between paid and unpaid work is hardly explained within the ETF framework. If partners’ relative economic resources have been equalizing in the last decades, we should have observed a more equal division of domestic chores. I shall come back on this and other shortcomings of the EFT later on.

forthcoming; Barbieri, 2009; Steiber, 2007; Blossfeld et al., 2005; Caldwell and Schindlmayr, 2003). It has been argued that this increasing economic uncertainty affects family behaviours not only directly, through a reduced economic well-being, but also indirectly, i.e. making long-term commitments more risky and thus contributing to the above-mentioned “crisis” of the family (Nazio and Blossfeld, 2003; Oppenheimer, 1988).

As can be derived from the literature, a complete “structural” explanation of recent demographic trends have to take into account cross-country differences in institutional settings, which strongly influence pace and patterns of the trends in female labour market participation and fertility. In fact, the latter are very differentiated across countries according to their position into the Esping-Andersen’s welfare regimes typology (1990, 1999). Welfare regimes are assumed to be important actors within the outlined theoretical framework in several ways. First of all, they influence the levels of female labour market participation and fertility through family policies and labour market regulative systems (*ibidem*), giving different answers to the “cost disease” which characterizes the process of economic tertiarization (Baumol, 1967). Countries which internalize in the State or in the Market women’s activities in the service sector have much higher female labour market participation rates than those “familiarizing” them (Esping-Andersen, 1999). Second, welfare regimes also contributed, at a certain point of the process of transition toward the dual-earner model, to turn the negative macro-correlation between female labour market participation and fertility into a positive one (Ahn and Mira, 2002). Third, they fostered the development of a gender-equal division of domestic work and a broader gender equalization (Esping-Andersen, edited by, 2007), which it has been claimed to have an important effect on fertility (Olah, 2011; McDonald, 2000).

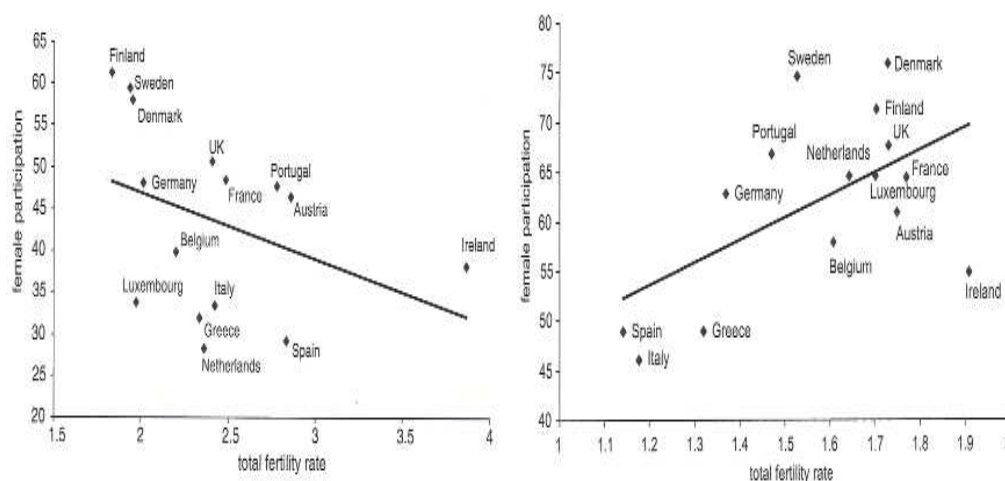
At the household and individual levels, the inclusion of welfare regimes in the theoretical framework corresponds to an interaction between couples’ and individuals’ socio-economic characteristics and institutional settings in the way the former affect female labour market participation and fertility decisions, as it will be shown.

1.1.2 *Some “new” facts: trade-off between fertility and female labour market participation*

In fact, the international literature underlines a high cross-country variability concerning the trends shown in Fig. 1. Even if the negative effects of childbirths on female participation are still strong (and varying according to children’s age and number), at least in some countries younger cohorts of women display higher levels of re-entering in the labour market and a less sharp decline around childbirths (Fouarge et al., 2010; Russell et al., 2006; Blossfeld and Drobnič, 2001). As I show in Fig. 2, female labour market participation is now higher in

countries that were able to set a system of social policies fostering the conciliation of female labour market participation and parental decisions. In 2000 countries with the lowest fertility rates (Southern Europe and especially Italy, Spain and Greece) are those with the lowest female labour market participation (Sleebos, 2003; Esping-Andersen, 1999, 1990). The opposite is true if we look at the Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Finland and Denmark). As it is possible to see in Fig. 2, the correlation between female participation and fertility turned its sign, keeping the same intensity, becoming positive from the negative one noticeable in 1970 (Ahn and Mira, 2002).

Fig. 2 Cross-country correlation between female labour market participation and fertility in 15 European countries in 1970 and 2000



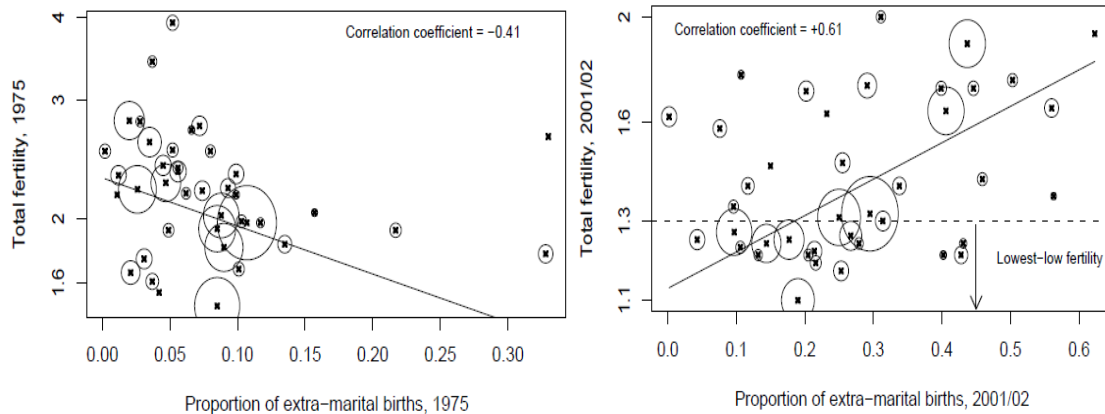
Source: Del Boca and Locatelli (2007)

It is interesting to notice that those countries where fertility is higher are also the ones where new family forms are more widespread. As shown in Fig 3, also the correlation between TFRs and extra-marital births turned its sign in the same time-span.

The crucial mechanism by which countries such as the U.K., the Netherlands, France and Scandinavian countries have been able to reach those results in terms of (relatively) high levels of both fertility and female labour market participation is that in those countries the latter is less likely to be interrupted around childbirths (Fouarge et al., 2010; Gustaffson and Kenjoh, 2007; Russell et al., 2006), as it is possible to see in Fig. 4.

In the five countries considered, the majority of women were in the labour market one year before the first childbirth, even if with very different percentages.

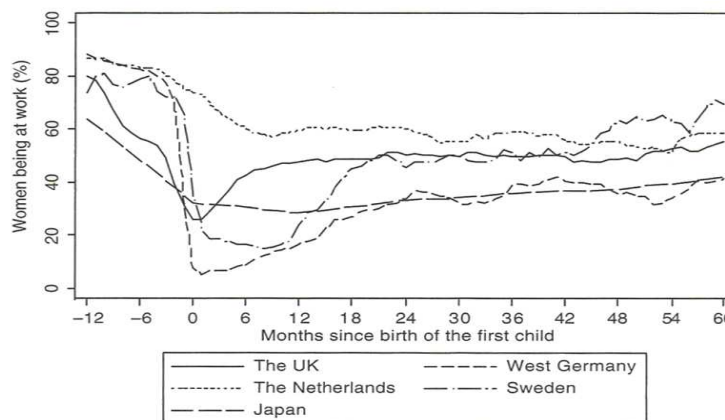
Fig. 3 TFRs and extra-marital births in 1975 and 2001/02 in Europe



Source: Kohler et al., 2006

In Germany and in Sweden, very likely for features of their social policies systems (and especially their generous parental leave schemas, see Del Boca and Wetzels, edited by, 2007), many women stay at home when the child is 1 year old. But Sweden, with the U.K., is the country with both the faster pace of re-entering into the labour market and the highest number of mothers employed not only 1 year before the childbirth but also when the child is 5 years old, followed by the Netherlands.

Fig. 4 Percentage of Women in the labour market around the first childbirth.



Source: Gustaffson e Kenjoh (2007)

This empirical evidence suggests that if Becker was right in connecting increasing women’s educational attainment to lower fertility and the weakening centrality of marriage, for fertility rates are below the replacement level in all European countries and extra-marital births

constitute almost half of all European births in 2001/2, institutional settings have created unexpected macro-level patterns.

The evidence of women's strong investments in education and the positive macro-correlation between female labour market participation and fertility rates call for a review of the ETF. As a matter of fact, Becker's microeconomic theory seems to fit reasonably to the post-war fordist society (Esping-Andersen, edited by, 2007), with low levels of female education, the male breadwinner norm and stable partnerships. It is not by chance that, according to Becker, in present-day societies (patriarchal) family as a social institution is in crisis⁹. In this new scenario, three pillars of Becker's specialization thesis seem to be under attack (*ibidem*):

- a) female fertility and participation choices are decreasingly related to males' earnings power;
- b) female high education is now positively related to fertility (but to a different extent across countries);
- c) the large majority of women want to reconcile economic independence and motherhood (Hakim, 2000).

As domestic work is still unequally divided, the main problem to solve by women and public policies is therefore a time-problem. That is maybe the reason why the above-mentioned high-education effect on fertility is stronger among Scandinavian women: they are able to "convince" – in a real "bargaining" process in which wives and husbands try to maximize different utility functions, differently from the standard Becker's model which postulate a joint family utility function – their (highly educated) husbands to participate in childcare and homemaking (Brodmann et al., 2007). But this is possible only where a more egalitarian division of domestic work is now developing (Esping-Andersen, 2009). Indeed, as I already maintained, husbands' help in domestic work and more gender equality are not the only relevant aspects in order to reconcile female participation and fertility as, actually, those has been considered as emerging results from a wider institutional setting able to overcome the male breadwinner model (Esping-Andersen, 2009; Esping-Andersen, edited by, 2007)¹⁰. That is because different institutional settings determine social policies, labour market regulative

⁹ It can be added that the Becker's model not only has a "normative" foundation, but also that it assumes a stable and highly paid career for the male breadwinner. Conditions typical during the "*treunte glorieuses*", much less in the post-industrial economies, that need the dual earner family also to increase the demand for labour in the service sector (Esping-Andersen, 1999).

¹⁰ For instance, once work-family reconciliation is fostered by social and family policies, not only beliefs in favour of employed mother with little children can improve (Fogli and Veldkamp, 2011), but also the burden of childcare is reduced making it easier for men to cooperate (Esping-Andersen, edited by, 2007).

models and family arrangements fostering women's dual-role. For example, different countries can both increase fertility and labour market participation around childbirths through a) part-time jobs, b) a flexicurity labour market regulative model and c) public childcare provisions (Del Boca and Sauer, 2009; Del Boca et al., 2007)¹¹. Van Bavel and Róžańska-Putek (2010) found that the positive effects of women's education on their risk of having a second child, which is a crucial determinant of cross-country differences in TFRs, are strongly mediated by the availability of public childcare for children aged less than three, which has no effects on less educated women.

So, the countries which now obtain higher fertility rates are those which support the completion of the "revolution in women's role" by enhancing their integration into the labour market and gender equality in the division of paid and unpaid activities, aspects which were neglected in the standard ETF (Esping-Andersen, 2009; Esping-Andersen, edited by, 2007). If the importance of equality between partners reduces the theoretical and empirical relevance of the Becker's specialization thesis to understand recent reproductive behaviours and fertility dynamics in Western countries, it has to be said that gender equality is not the mere product of welfare regimes. For instance, Van Berkel and de Graaf (1999) showed how, in the Netherlands, egalitarian gender attitudes are more likely to explain the more equal division of domestic work among highly educated couples, rather than alternative hypotheses based on the human capital theory. But in a more "traditional" context such as West-Germany, Schulz and Blossfeld (2006) found different combinations of partners' socioeconomic characteristics to influence to a very limited extent the division of domestic chores, which fall almost completely on wives after the first childbirth and with the time after marriage. These results suggest that European countries differ to the extent of their adaptation to changed women's roles not only in terms of social and family policies, but also in terms of national cultures being more or less keen on gender equality. On the opposite, it may be argued that social and family policies are, at least partially, an endogenous product of these different cultural orientations. This perspective will be deepened in the second section of this chapter.

¹¹ The theoretical focus of this chapter is on those social and family policies that may raise both fertility and female labour market participation by fostering the reconciliation of work and family duties. Notwithstanding, one might argue that organizing an income policy making it very difficult to have a decent life within a single earner family might work as well. However, it has been shown how single earner families are especially at risk of poverty, after the birth of a child, precisely in Southern European countries (Barbieri and Bozzon, forthcoming), where both fertility and female labour market participation rates are the lowest. As argued by Scherer and Reyneri (2008), economic necessity seems not to push Italian women into the labour market without the availability of "adequate" (e.g., part-time) employment. So, if it is true that single earner families in Scandinavian countries face high opportunity-costs given the tax system, the levels of cash benefits per child and other welfare measures which promote dual earner families with children, it is not true that the absolute living conditions of single earner families are worse in Scandinavian countries than in Southern European ones.

1.1.3 *Joining macro-, meso- and micro-levels: trends and mechanisms underlying the relations between “work” and “family” as they are shaped by welfare regimes*

In this section I want to systematize the main arguments discussed in the previous paragraphs concerning the role of welfare regimes in shaping meso- and micro-mechanisms underlying female labour market participation and fertility, as they can be derived from the ETF, also taking into account more recent developments concerning the role of educational homogamy and gender equality within couples. The aim is to translate the theoretical framework presented above into a set of research hypotheses that will be applied to the Italian case in the second chapter.

Even if individuals’ decisions concerning education, labour market participation and fertility are endogenous to each other (Del Boca et al., 2007), it is common habit in the literature to distinguish, for analytical reasons, two causal paths to investigate the relations between the family formation process and couples’ participation in the labour market. The first causal path concerns the a) *effects of the work domain on the family one*, aiming to grasp the “structural” determinants of fertility; the second causal path focuses on b) *the effects of childbirths on (women’s) work careers*.

Tab. 1 starts with a summary of the posited effects of welfare regimes on levels and trends for the two dependent processes considered.

Tab. 1 Welfare Regimes, levels and trends in female participation and fertility

Welfare Regimes	Institutional settings		Work>Family	Family>Work			Global Outcomes	
	Family policies	LM regulations	Postponement effects (and sequencing of events)	Exit at childbirth	Pace of re-entering	Total re-entering	Fertility	Female LMP
Mediterranean	-	--	++	--	--	--	--	--
Conservative	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+	-/+
Liberal	-	++	-	++	++	+	+	++
Socialdemocratic	++	+	--	+	++	++	+	++

The first column includes four welfare regimes, thus distinguishing the Mediterranean one from the wider Conservative model (Ferrera, 1998). The second and third columns represent their institutional settings in terms of family policies and labour market regulative systems and each minus/plus refers to their capability of fostering the reconciliation of work and

family duties¹². Reconciliation is eased in both the Socialdemocratic and Liberal models, less in the Conservative and, above all, the Mediterranean one. The Liberal model has a high level of market-driven de-familialization, while the Socialdemocratic one reaches the same objective by means of family policies and the flexicurity model (Madsen, 2006)¹³. As it has already been argued, a positive correlation between the reconciliation potential of welfare regimes and both female labour market participation and fertility is posited (the last two columns of Tab. 1). In this respect, the Conservative model is always in an intermediate position, since family policies are very differently developed (highly in France, much more weakly in the Netherlands), as well as labour market regulations (the Dutch labour market is very similar to a flexicurity model and has a high availability of good quality part-time jobs, see Muffels and Luijkx, 2008; Visser, 2002).

These general outcomes can be analysed into the two causal paths going from “work to family” and from “family to work”. Starting from the former, the third column of Tab. 1 shows how welfare regimes differ to the extent of their capability to avoid the so called “postponement syndrome” (Livi Bacci, 1997), that is a complex process entailing all the steps of the transition to adulthood.

At the beginning of this chapter it has been recognized how the main factors commonly adopted to explain the postponement of fertility, from a “structural” perspective, are the increased (female) participation in the educational system and the economic insecurity due to the spreading of atypical employment. But, as we have seen evaluating the effects of women’s education on the transition to childbirths, in the Scandinavian countries, the postponement process does not necessary mean less children and, especially, there is no strong correlation among women between high education and the probability to be childless (Andersson et al., 2009; Hoem et al., 2006). In this respect, in the U.K. it has been found that having a child at a very early age does not imply an end of the educational attainment process (Dex et al., 1998). Therefore, it seems that in Socialdemocratic and Liberal models women’s’ educational and parental decisions are somewhat more independent. Moreover, the flexicurity model has made labour market flexibilization reforms less detrimental to the transition to adulthood, for the entrapment-effects are weaker, comparing with the Conservative and especially the

¹² The reader should be aware that the pluses and minuses in Tab. 1-3 must be read in relative terms. Therefore, I am concerned here not in the relative explanatory relevance of the macro-, meso- and micro-levels neither in the intensity of the differences across countries. Both arguments still constitute an issue to be tested by more focused empirical research (Steiber, 2003).

¹³ The basic idea of the system is that public policies should focus not on the protection of the job but of income (through universalist unemployment benefits) and “occupability” (through a system of active labour market policies). So, the flexicurity model proposes “global” flexibility (non “partial and targeted”), but short and protected (avoiding the precarious careers and spread of inequalities of the Conservative and especially Mediterranean models, see further).

Mediterranean model, where the protection of young people relies on the family of origin (Aassve et al., 2001b).

In Continental and, especially, Mediterranean countries, where flexibilization reforms brought to a high labour segmentation between typical and atypical employment with high employment and economic uncertainty for the latter (Barbieri, 2009; for Italy see Barbieri and Scherer, 2009; Gagliarducci, 2005; for Germany see Gebel, 2009; Giesecke, 2009; Giesecke and Groß, 2003; for Spain see Sala and Silva, 2009; Polavieja, 2003), not only the transition to adulthood is discouraged, but also the effects of the postponement of the transition to adulthood on the *quantum* of fertility are much stronger (Bratti and Tatsiramos, 2011; Kohler et al., 2006, 2002). In those countries the leaving home process is strictly connected with men's economic resources and employment stability, while for women is more important to find a partner (Aassve et al., 2001a; Aassve et al., 2001b). Since in Southern Europe the sequencing of events (exit from school, with a long stay in the family of origin, followed by a late leaving home for family formation and eventually parenthood) is pretty much rigid and the same gendered pattern of effects of socioeconomic characteristics is found at each step of the process (*ibidem*; Baizán and Martín-García, 2006; Bernardi and Nazio, 2005), the result is that here the whole process of transition to adulthood is strongly delayed. The typical path is that of a long stay in the family of origin, then, when the economic conditions allow it, the transition to adulthood is somewhat accelerated. The situation is even worsened by the fact that in Southern European countries housing markets are rather tight (Esping-Andersen, edited by, 2007; Nazio and Blossfeld, 2003; Aassve et al., 2001b) and this, in turn, makes the role of education and economic resources even more relevant.

For what concerns the path from “family to work”, in Tab. 1 I consider female labour market participation around childbirths distinguishing three moments:

- a) the probability of being out of the labour market at the first childbirth;
- b) the pace of re-entering in the labour market in the subsequent years;
- c) women's probability of being in the labour market several years after their first childbirth.

First of all, it must be recognized how, comparing with the previous path, in this case there is no plenty of empirical research, especially concerning the meso-/micro-mechanisms that are presented in Tab. 3. Nevertheless, from the available literature (Fouarge et al., 2010; Gustaffson and Kenjoh, 2007; Lucchini et al., 2007; Russell et al., 2006; Gutiérrez-Doménech, 2005; Steiber, 2003; Blossfeld and Drobnič, edited by, 2001; Gustaffson et al., 1996) it is

possible to generalize some patterns of welfare regimes' effects on both trends and their underlying mechanisms.

Starting from women's probability of exiting the labour market around childbirths, I warn that I refer mainly to the average effects of the first child. Several analyses have shown how childbirths' effects differ according to the birth order and the age of children, as well as period (Fouarge et al., 2010; Lucchini et al., 2007; Russell et al., 2006; Blossfeld and Drobnič, edited by, 2001). For what concerns the latter, it has already been mentioned how younger generations of women tend to remain much more attached to the labour market, results that can be clearly seen for the Netherlands (Fouarge et al., 2010).

The probability of being out of the labour market at the childbirth in the U.K. is rather strong, both immediately before and after, since in the U.K. there are neither public childcare provisions nor generous parental leave schemas. But here the pace of re-entering is rather sharp, even if, on the long run, a big share of women does not re-enter into the labour market (Fouarge et al., 2010; Gustaffson and Kenjoh, 2007; Russell et al., 2006). A completely opposite pattern is found in the Mediterranean welfare regime, and especially in Italy and Spain. In these countries most women either work before and after entering motherhood or are non-employed at both moments, according to the so called "exit or full-time model" (Fouarge et al., 2010; Esping-Andersen, 2009; Del Boca and Sauer, 2009; Lucchini et al., 2007; Steiber, 2003). Those women who leave the labour market face strong obstacles for their re-entering, due to both family policies and labour market arrangements (i.e. lack of public childcare for children in the crucial age 0-3 and labour market rigidity, see Del Boca and Sauer, 2009; Lucchini et al., 2007). Therefore, Gutiérrez-Doménech (2005) found that the line representing Italian women's employment rates around first childbirth is low and (almost) totally flat.

The Conservative welfare regime model is as usual highly differentiated, even more in this respect. In Germany women tend to stay out of the labour market after childbirths for the availability of long parental leaves and for the tax system favouring the male breadwinner model (Del Boca and Wetzels, edited by, 2007). Moreover, the lack of public childcare provisions affects the very slow pace and the low amount of women re-entering into the labour market in the long run. Again different is the situation in the Netherlands. Here women tend to remain in the labour market for the availability of part-time jobs while those women exiting the labour market face some obstacles in their probability of re-entering for the poorness of family policies, a pattern that can be seen in Fig. 4. But, as I said, both period and the number of children matter here (Fouarge et al., 2010; Kalmijn and Luijkx, 2006): in the Netherlands, especially starting from the '90s, younger cohorts of Dutch women do not leave the labour market after the first childbirth and are also very likely to re-enter after subsequent childbirths.

The specific Dutch situation, which recently focused not only on the diffusion of part-time employment but also on a more general and gender-equal redistribution of the time dedicated to leisure, paid and unpaid work constitutes the focus of the fifth chapter.

Lastly, in the Socialdemocratic model women tend to temporarily leave the labour market more than in most of Conservative and Mediterranean countries for the high attractiveness of maternity/paternity leaves and longer parental leaves, but, for features of both labour market arrangements and family policies, they face the faster pace of re-entering and, in the long run, most of women are back into the labour market (Gustaffson and Kenjoh, 2007).

1.1.3a Welfare Regimes and the mechanisms underlying the transition to parenthood

Tab. 2 presents the effects of welfare regimes on micro- and meso-mechanisms, starting from the “Work>Family” path¹⁴.

Tab. 2 Welfare Regimes and the mechanisms underlying the transition to parenthood					
Welfare Regimes	Transition to the first childbirth (timing)				
	<i>W'</i> <i>Education</i>	<i>W'</i> <i>resources</i>	<i>M'</i> <i>Education</i>	<i>M'</i> <i>resources</i>	<i>W'</i> <i>Dependence on M</i>
Mediterranean	---	---	--	+++	+++
Conservative	--	--	-	++	++
Liberal	--	-	-	+	+
Socialdemocratic	-	+	-	+	--
	Transition to higher-order childbirths (number)				
	<i>W'</i> <i>education</i>	<i>W'</i> <i>resources</i>	<i>M'</i> <i>Education</i>	<i>M'</i> <i>resources</i>	<i>W'</i> <i>Dependence on M</i>
Mediterranean	+	--	+	+++	++
Conservative	++	-	++	++	+
Liberal	++	-/+	++	+	-/+
Socialdemocratic	+++	+	+++	+	--

Apart from the Socialdemocratic model, education has negative effects on the transition to the first child in all other countries and especially among women. The negative effects among men and women are stronger in the Mediterranean countries, followed by the Conservative model and the U.K.. As far as women, that is because in Southern Europe there are clear signals that the decisions about educational and fertility careers are strictly interdependent (Martín-García, 2009a, 2009b; Baizán and Martín-García, 2006), as women have to decide between a market vs. a family orientation. The choice of the field of study is quite revealing in this respect. Martín-García found women choosing those fields of study concerned with the care of

¹⁴ In tabb. 2 and 3 the number of minus/plus refers to the expected sign and intensity of the effects of the variables, related to each characteristic taken into account, on the analysed processes.

individuals, and/or emphasizing interpersonal skills, to have a lower probability of being childless than women choosing other fields of study (2009a). Interestingly, this finding was not confirmed among Spanish men (Martin-Garcia, 2009b). Among them, educational and reproductive choices are more independent and the field of study works in the opposite direction comparing with women¹⁵. As a consequence, the impact of the educational level is not linear among men, for the transition to the first child is postponed especially among those with general secondary education and a university degree in “female oriented” fields. This gendered pattern of effect of educational enrolment, fields and levels should be connected with the relevance of men’s resources in the Mediterranean countries, which can explain why “stronger” (technical and scientific) fields of study are correlated with higher male fertility (*ibidem*)¹⁶. As far as Southern European men, the strong negative effects of education on the transition to the first child is also due to the high unemployment rates and labour market uncertainty, for the latter reduce the returns of education. In fact, it is a general finding that the “globalization” and its labour market consequences in terms of increasing uncertainty make longer the transition into a first job matching the highest education attained (Blossfeld et al., 2008)¹⁷.

Sharp differences in terms of gender and welfare regimes can be found also concerning the effects of economic resources. With the exception of the Socialdemocratic model, in the remaining models the effects of economic resources are positive among men and negative among women (Blossfeld et al., 2005). The differences between the U.K. and, for example, Germany, is that in the former labour market instability matters much less among men, as few temporary workers experience high risks of remaining in atypical employment at older ages (Gebel, 2009). The postponement of the transition to parenthood is mainly due, in the U.K., to the postponement of the transition to marriage, after cohabitation or long time spent being single (Schmitt, 2008; Golsch, 2001). To understand the British pattern it should be recalled how women’s reconciliation is mainly fostered by the flexibility of the labour market and the availability of part-time jobs. The positive correlation between part-time employment and fertility among British women has been indeed interpreted in line of a preference toward a combination of work and family roles (Schmitt, 2008). Even if income has a negative effect similarly to Conservative and Mediterranean countries, English women face a market-driven de-

¹⁵ This can also explain why women still continue to snub scientific and technical faculties: their choice about the length and the kind of education is nested in a broader view concerning their future life-balance between work and family duties, it is then endogenous with respect of fertility decisions (Martin-Garcia, 2009a and 2009b).

¹⁶ The issue concerning the gendered pattern of effects of educational enrolment, levels and fields which has been found in Spain will be confirmed and extended for Italy as well in the empirical analyses presented in chapters 2 and 3.

¹⁷ That is why, in Tab. 2, “resources” indicate both income and employment stability (in terms of unemployment spells and atypical “careers”).

familialization, also thanks to direct – aimed at buying childcare on the market – and indirect monetary transfers working as incentives for female labour market participation (Del Boca and Wetzels, edited by, 2007). On the opposite, in Germany women experience increasing risks of childbearing after even short unemployment or temporary work spells, while part-time has no positive effects (Kreyenfeld, 2010; Schmitt, 2008). This shows how the choice between an occupational role or a traditional division of labour is prevailing in Germany, also encouraged by the German tax-system supporting single-earner families (*ibidem*; Del Boca and Wetzels, edited by, 2007).

The positive effects of economic resources are much stronger among men in Southern Europe, with a high level of women's dependency on men's resources, with explanations largely overlapping the ones given for the leaving home process and the "postponement syndrome".

The mechanisms underlying the transition to adulthood in Sweden are very similar for men and women. As Bygren et al. (2005) point out, "no dramatic gender differences [are found] as regards the impact of uncertainty on young people's job attainment, their entry into cohabitation, or their transition to parenthood. Higher education and good economic resources increase both men's and women's propensities of entering parenthood" (*ibidem*: 12).

The final result of those patterns of effects is that the degree of women's dependence on husbands' resources is predicted to vary quite a lot across welfare regimes, reaching the highest level in the Mediterranean model and disappearing among Scandinavian countries.

Shifting now to higher-order childbirths, the first change concerns the effects of education, now becoming positive and especially among Scandinavian countries¹⁸.

Nothing changes for what concerns the gendered pattern of effects of economic resources and women's dependence on men's resources among welfare regimes. It is only recognized how the effects of women's economic resources may become less negative, for the first childbirth constitutes the most crucial moment in determining women's career, especially in Southern European countries (Rondinelli et al., 2010; Giraldo et al., 2004). It should also be recalled that in the latter most of the gendered effects of economic resources are filtered at the moment of leaving home and entering the first stable union. But results point to very weak

¹⁸ It should be noticed that, if third and higher order childbirths are included in the analysis, the positive effect of education have found to become much smaller in Denmark (Baizán, 2005). This suggests that while the gender-equalized Socialdemocratic setting may be the perfect context for dual earner families with two children, in the meantime it may reduce the diffusion of families with more than two children (Esping-Andersen, 1999). However, Dribe and Stanfors (2010) report the strongest positive effects of tertiary education of both partners in Sweden at the transition to the third child. The empirical results concerning the cross-country patterns of the relation between education and higher-order childbirths has been claimed to depend quite a lot on the methodology adopted and still uncertain is the interpretation of the positive correlation (Dalla Zuanna and Impicciatore, 2008; Kravdal, 2007). I shall come back on this in the third chapter.

effects of income on higher-order childbirths also among German and British women (Baizán, 2005; Kreyenfeld and Zabel, 2005).

However, there are some empirical findings suggesting that the effects of economic resources on second and higher-order childbirths may be non-linear. Especially in the U.K., it has been found that both women with very high and very low income are the most likely to experience higher-order births, while this does not hold for Italy and Spain (*ibidem*). This can be explained by the fact that British women with higher income can afford childcare services on the market. The little positive effect of high education among women in Mediterranean countries can hide some non-linearities too. This holds especially for Spanish women, for whom the pattern seems to be that of a reverse U-shaped relationship (Cooke, 2008; Martín-García, 2005). In the case of Italy, Rondinelli et al. (2010) found some differences between Northern and Southern regions as in the former a (weak) income effect seems to prevail. This confirms the idea that the more the institutional setting helps women to reconcile work and family, the more an income effect prevails on a substitution effect. Of course, more empirical research is needed to figure out to what extent the differences between Italian regions are due to “structural” – e.g. Northern regions are better endowed with childcare services and flexible labour market arrangements – and/or “cultural” differences, i.e. the persistency of the male breadwinner norm in Southern regions¹⁹.

1.1.3b Welfare Regimes and the mechanisms underlying female labour market participation around childbirths

In Tab. 3 micro- and meso-mechanisms underlying female labour market participation around childbirths are presented

Tab. 3 Welfare Regimes and the mechanisms underlying female labour market participation around childbirth(s)			
Welfare Regimes	Couple's members own education and resources		
	<i>W' education</i>	<i>W' resources</i>	<i>Effects of men' education and resources</i>
Mediterranean	++	+++	--
Conservative	+	++	-
Liberal	-/+	++	-/+
Socialdemocratic	-/+	+	+

¹⁹ This does not only pertain the difference in the effect of economic resources, but also the finding that it takes generally less time for women in Southern regions to get married, have a first as well as high-order childbirths (Rondinelli et al., 2010; Pisati, 2002). These findings constitute the topic of the third chapter.

Common to all welfare models is that, consistently with the human capital theory, the higher women's education and earning potentials, the higher the probability for them to remain (at least with a part-time job) or to return in the labour market after a temporary exit around childbirths. However, tab. 3 suggests that female labour market participation around childbirths is particularly stratified where participation rates are very low. If women's permanence in the labour market is institutionally (and culturally?) promoted, it is also less socially structured (Gustaffson and Kenjoh, 2007; Steiber, 2007; Gutiérrez-Doménech, 2005; Blossfeld and Drobnič, edited by, 2001; Gustaffson et al., 1996).

Generally speaking, women's resources, in terms of income, occupational prestige and full-time experience prior to the childbirth, matter more than education itself. For instance, in Germany, Sweden and Denmark it has been found that once models of female labour market participation around childbirths control for the above mentioned economic factors, educational attainment has no additional direct effects (Blossfeld et al., 2001; Henz and Sundström, 2001; Leth-Sorensen and Rohwer, 2001). This seems not hold in Mediterranean countries, for here both cultural and economic resources matter a lot in influencing women's participation decisions (Solera, 2006). Educational effects may capture the influence of traditional values concerning the role of women, as exemplified by the strong positive effects found in Italy and Spain of having had a working mother, the regional area of residence and religiosity levels (Gutiérrez-Doménech, 2005; Bernardi, 2001). On the opposite, Gutiérrez-Doménech (2005) found no effects of religiosity on the probability to be employed after childbearing among Swedish women²⁰.

The situation is not so clear for the U.K., where it has been claimed an important role of high educational attainment (Dex et al., 1998), and the same was found in the U.S. (Drobnič et al., 1999). The latter authors found that in Germany, comparing with the U.S., higher educational attainment has no effect on withdrawals from full-time employment. Moreover, the family cycle (presence of children, especially in pre-school age) was found to be much more influent on labour market withdrawals in Germany. But these authors did not take into account occupational prestige and, especially, previous full-time employment as measures of women's earning potentials. When this has been done, no strong effects of education were found in the U.K. too (McCulloch and Dex, 2001).

²⁰ The issue of the different effects across countries of values such as religiosity on female labour market participation and fertility will be treated in the fourth chapter.

Globally speaking, the effects of overall women's social position on their labour market participation are weaker in the Liberal and especially Socialdemocratic welfare regimes (Gutiérrez-Doménech, 2005; Blossfeld and Drobnič, edited by, 2001; Gustafsson et al., 1996).

Finally, different welfare regimes account for the different impact of husbands' cultural and economic resources and the reproduction of Becker's specialization model. In the Mediterranean and Conservative welfare regimes, husbands' resources are found to have a negative effect on female labour market participation around childbirths (Blossfeld and Drobnič, edited by, 2001). These effects are negligible in the U.K. and become positive in the Socialdemocratic welfare regimes. For the U.S., Blau and Kahn (2007) found a dramatic decrease in the responsiveness of married women's labour supply to their own and husbands' wages, becoming both, and especially the latter, non significant during the 1990s, confirming the predictions of Tab. 3.

It must be recognized that within welfare regimes variation is larger than Blossfeld and Drobnič acknowledge and their results mainly rely on findings valid until the 1990s (Breen, 2003). Recently, Lucchini et al. (2007: 305) claimed that "job histories of Italian working husbands and wives are always largely, if not to say completely, independent from each other", while the most important predictors of women's labour market participation around childbirths are their economic and educational resources. While this just confirms the more important role of social stratification in a context like the Italian one, with low levels of de-familialization through family policies and high gender inequality (one of the biggest asymmetry concerning the gender division of unpaid work in Europe, OECD, 2011), the authors find a significant positive impact of husbands being more educated than wives on the latter's transition from employment to housework.

Another consideration should be done. It is possible that recent changes in labour market regulative systems of the kind implemented in Southern European countries may have important consequences in terms of women's dependency on their partners' resources. It is possible indeed that recent labour market flexibilization reforms are shifting the younger generations to behave more similarly to the Liberal model. In a highly segmented labour market with growing female labour market participation and dual-career couples it may be more difficult for young men to perform their breadwinner role, even if this is still favoured by features of the institutional setting. In the Italian case, it is therefore possible to hypothesize that increasing financial constraints are weakening women's dependence on their partners. For example, it has been found that the percentage of "pseudo-self employed" men married with a working wife is much higher than that of men with a stable job, even after controlling for their higher level of education (Reyneri, 2005). Moreover, as working women in Italy face a hard

trade-off between career and childbirths, they have fewer children and so this makes easier for them to reconcile work and family regardless of husbands' economic resources and support in domestic chores.

The latter are just indications of the importance to evaluate micro- and meso-mechanisms and the role of welfare regimes in shaping them by different cohorts: it is possible that in Italy the negative effects of husbands' resources on women's participation, even if still present, are becoming weaker, following a pattern similar to the one found for the U.S. (Blau and Kahn, 2007). This hypothesis will be empirically tested in the next chapter where the outlined framework will be applied to the Italian case.

1.2 The “Cultural” Dimension and its Impact on Trends and Mechanisms Underlying Female Labour Market Participation and Fertility

1.2.1 An introduction to the role of “culture” to understand recent female labour market participation and fertility trends

The theoretical framework developed in the previous paragraphs will be applied in the first empirical chapter to study the transition to the first child and female labour market participation around first and higher-order childbirths in Italy. The analyses will show how the meso- and micro-levels mechanisms connected with social stratification are consistent with the familialistic Italian institutional setting, although some changes across cohorts will be described. But it will be also underlined how, to understand the Italian pattern, which is common to other Southern European countries as well, the theoretical framework outlined above may be not sufficient and that it may be useful to enlarge the spectrum of explanatory factors when analysing low fertility-low female labour market participation patterns.

In the previous section it has been described how some important changes in women's behaviours have brought to a new equilibrium in which families made by two highly educated partners sharing (more) equally childcare and domestic chores are the most likely to have children and to conciliate work and family duties (Esping-Andersen, 2009). While this clearly corresponds to an attack at the foundations of the Economic Theory of the Family, it has also been recognized how such a new equilibrium is strongly influenced by welfare regimes supporting the completion of the revolution of women's role (*ibidem*).

In the perspective adopted in such a theoretical framework, welfare regimes have been considered as acting as exogenous actors shaping the consequences of women's investments in education and labour market careers. As mentioned, although this strategy is worthy of being

pursued to guide empirical research within a medium-term perspective (Aassve et al., 2001b), it has several theoretical shortcomings for it neglects the cultural foundations of institutional settings with respect to features of national cultures. Why for some countries it has been so easy to adopt their welfare measures to conciliate work and family duties? Why has gender equality developed at the household level only among highly educated couples and in Scandinavian countries? Is that the mere result of the Socialdemocratic welfare regime or family policies are endogenously produced within the process of socioeconomic change started with the educational expansion?

In this section, the aim is to integrate the structural perspective presented in the previous paragraphs in many respects. First, the endogeneity of welfare regimes will be treated. Then, the criticism of the EFT will be further deepened by recognizing the role of values and preferences to understand new family behaviours such as cohabitations, extra-marital births, marital instability and sub-replacement fertility. While new family forms have been interpreted in the previous section as the mere consequence of the declining utility of marriage, due to rising women's economic independence, and low fertility as being caused by the higher opportunity-costs of children, in this section the "ideal" roots of this wide process of socioeconomic change will be discussed based on the "Second Demographic Transition" thesis (Lesthaeghe, 1995; Van de Kaa, 1987; Lesthaeghe and Van de Kaa, 1986).

The arguments discussed here will constitute the theoretical background of the empirical analyses presented in chapters three, four and five. But, before to start with the analysis of the endogeneity of welfare regimes, a brief introduction to the concept of "culture" and how will be defined in this thesis is needed. This is a critical aspect since, although there is a growing bulk of empirical evidence concerning the effects of values and preferences on many economic outcomes (Guiso et al., 2006), often a clear conceptualization of how culture is defined is lacking. To overcome this shortcoming, Guiso et al. suggest that culture should be defined as "those customary beliefs and values that ethnic, religious, and social groups transmit fairly unchanged from generation to generation" (*ibidem*: 23). The reason to focus on elements of culture which are stable over time – within a society, social groups or individuals – it is justified mainly by methodological concerns. As it has been mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, if it is possible to show that values and attitudes are constant over individuals' life-cycle, the claims about the existence of genuine causal effects of culture on the phenomena being analysed are reinforced. In my view, such a conceptualization of culture is too narrow and it can partly explain why cultural explanations have been disregarded by "structural" sociologists. If, for instance, the North-South Italian divide in socioeconomic development has to be traced back to the different amount of social capital deriving from the diverging historical paths followed since

the Middle Age (Putnam, 1993; Banfield, 1958), apparently there would be no space left for policy reforms and, more generally, to hope for a process of social change.

Although in this thesis it is assumed that some cultural features show a very high degree of long-term persistence based on processes of intergenerational transmission (Bisin and Verdier, 2011, 2001; Guiso et al., 2008b), the above-mentioned definition of culture seems to rule out the possibility that huge processes of cultural change can occur across few generations. Granato et al. (1996: 608), who refer to culture as “a system of basic common values that help shape the behavior of the people in a given society”, criticize such a definition arguing that “in most preindustrial societies this value system takes the form of a religion and changes very slowly; but with industrialization and accompanying processes of modernization, these worldviews tend to become more secular, rational and open to change”.

It is suggested then that “culture” should be treated as being composed of several “strata”, some of them being “deeper” and rooted in long-term historical differences, some others being more exposed to the “accompanying processes of modernization”. This distinction could be well represented by the concepts of social norms and preferences or attitudes respectively. While the former strongly rely on vertical socialization as mechanism of cultural transmission, the latter are more influenced by horizontal socialization and “diffusion processes” through social networks as the crucial learning mechanism (Fogli and Veldkamp, 2011). While this difference will be clarified with empirical examples in the following paragraphs, it is stressed here how culturally-influenced social actions – irrespective of whether they are driven by norms, preferences or attitudes – share a common motivation underlying them which is based on Weber’s idea of “value-rationality” (*wertrationalitat*, Weber, 1922). Differently from a utility-maximizing agency, value-rational actions are neither interested in the consequences nor in the appropriateness of the chosen means to reach a given goal. On the opposite, a specific course of action is pursued for its own sake, because it is the “right” way to do (*ibidem*).

It is argued that changes in preferences and attitudes following the modernization process can be hindered by historically rooted social norms and, at the same time, the latter can be renegotiated parallel to wide intergenerational cultural shifts. Adopting this perspective, it is suggested that empirical research should analyze some specific components of culture, depending on the analysed phenomena, at a given point in time and space (Granato et al., 1996), rather than the effects of “culture” as a whole by means of measures such as the ethnic background²¹.

²¹ Apart from recognizing the usefulness of an epidemiological strategy for causality concerns, as mentioned in the introduction.

Within the aim of this thesis, the most important socioeconomic process which has had a huge impact on both family values and behaviours is the educational expansion. It will be shown how the latter not only influenced new family behaviours and female labour market participation directly, i.e. by means of the above-mentioned utility-maximization mechanisms, but also indirectly, values and preferences being crucial intervenient variables. This perspective is indeed at the base of both the Inglehart's intergenerational cultural shift and SDT theses. The change in values and preferences toward family will be operationalized by means of religiosity, gender attitudes and post-materialism and it is argued that the decline of "traditional" cultural orientations constitutes an additional explanatory factor to understand recent trends in female labour market participation and fertility. However, values did not change at the same pace and to the same extent in all countries, because deeper differences in family cultures shaped the way countries adapted to the process of socioeconomic change driven by increasing female educational attainment and labour market attachment. In the thesis, these deeper features of the national cultures are conceptualized based on the analytical distinction between "strong" vs. "weak" family ties, originally proposed by Reher (1998), and its empirical applications to study Italian and Southern European welfare regimes (Alesina et al., 2010; Algan and Cahuc, 2005) and demographic patterns (Giuliano, 2010, 2007; Dalla Zuanna and Micheli, 2004; Dalla Zuanna, 2001).

The section will conclude by assessing the need for an integration of economic, institutional and cultural accounts since, taken separately, none of them allows for a sound explanation concerning fertility and female labour market participation trends, as it has been already shown in the case of the ETF. For instance, if the intergenerational cultural shift posited by Inglehart's and the SDT's theses has been hindered in Southern European countries due to their family cultures, it has to be addressed why these more "traditional" countries have both low female labour market participation and low fertility. Moreover, the theoretical framework discussed in previous paragraphs seems to suggest a "one-size-fits-all" welfare mix to alleviate the trade-off between female labour market participation and fertility, strongly based on the widespread availability of public provisions of childcare services and women's labour market integration in the public sector. It will be discussed how alternative institutional options are available and how institutional reforms have to take into account policy recipients' preferences.

1.2.2 *Endogeneity of the institutional settings with respect to family cultures*

Even adopting a mere structural perspective, the main reason why some European countries have had relatively high fertility rates in the last decades, although generally below the

replacement level, seems to be connected with a general “environment” fostering women’s dual role, more than other “strong” economic factors, like the GDP and households’ income, which are found to be not always that relevant even within countries²². For instance, Myrskylä et al. (2009) found further increases of the Human Development Index, at very high levels, to be positively correlated with fertility, thus contradicting the standard result that modernization causes lower fertility. However, this does not hold, for instance, in societies like South Korea, Japan and, to a lesser extent, Germany and Southern European countries (Luci and Thévenon, 2010). The France vs. Germany comparison is of particular interest, for these countries achieved similar results in terms of labour market and economic performances in the last decades, but in France fertility is much higher than its economic development would predict, while the opposite is true for Germany. The finding could be explained by the well-known differences in terms of public investments in family policies (*ibidem*; Del Boca et al., 2007). Indeed, Luci and Thévenon (2010) shows that what really matters in order to increase fertility is to increase female labour market participation rates, as a result of wider “institutional settings like norms and family policies” (*ibidem*: 36). Now, the question is where these long-lasting differences in institutional settings between European countries, especially along the North-South dividing line, come from.

Esping-Andersen himself, after he defended the thesis that the transition toward new work-family equilibria has been shaped by the institutional settings prevailing after WWII, ended his “Social Foundations of Post-industrial Societies” (1999) wondering about this issue. Curiously, as he often tended to consider culture and norms as determined by institutional settings²³, he depicted the ideal-types of three *homines* (*homo liberalis*, *homo socialdemocraticus* and *homo familisticus*) to express the kind of *weltanschauung* embodied in each welfare regime (or better, in each kind of society). It is particularly interesting to spend some words on the way he defines the last of the three *homines*. While *homo familisticus* should represent the whole Continental Europe but Scandinavia, it is impossible not to see some connections between this ideal-type and the concept of “amoral familism” and the familistic way of life described by Banfield in his classic work (1958). The focus of both the *homo* and *femina familisticus/a* is his/her nuclear family’s security and stability, which depends on a strict gendered division of paid and unpaid work. Given that households’ income is based on fathers’ jobs, *homo familisticus* strongly supports the State intervention in terms of employment

²² For instance, empirical results for Italy have shown that (household’s) income is only weakly related to higher-order childbirths among women (Rondinelli et al., 2010; Baizán, 2005; Giraldo et al., 2004), while among men having a (whatever) stable job is crucial to make the transition to a stable union (Bernardi and Nazio, 2005; Pisati, 2002), which is the main predictor of fertility.

²³ Concerning, for instance, the cross-country distribution of traditional gender attitudes, see Esping-Andersen, 2009 and, edited by, 2007.

protection for the insiders. The last comments suggest a deep sociocultural foundation not only of family policies, but also labour market settings.

As described by Alesina et al. (2010), where strong family ties prevail, individuals are willing to “exchange” lower wages and higher youth unemployment rates with stringent labour market and wage regulations. That is because they have strong preferences against job and geographical mobility, which may expose them to the monopsonic power of firms. In the same direction points the work by Algan and Cahuc (2005), which tries to answer the question why Southern European countries have low female, youth and older people employment rates. The results of their analysis confirm “strong labor supply composition effects within the family in countries which are found to be more attached to family ties. Eventually, we have shown that family attitudes are influenced by cultural factors in as much as people sharing the same backgrounds from their ancestors but facing different economic environment tend to react identically on family issues” (*ibidem*: 40).

Referring to the distinction between “deep”, historically-rooted cultural differences and changes in preferences and attitudes parallel to the modernization process, it is clear how family settings constitute an example of the former, although not the only one. For instance, an important research stream within the so called “cultural economics” (Fernández, 2010; Guiso et al., 2006) has focused on trust and social capital – interpreted as “the set of beliefs and values that foster cooperation” (Guiso et al., 2008a) – as determinants of economic behaviours and outcomes. First of all, Alesina and Giuliano (2009) showed how strong family ties are correlated with low levels of trust and political participation, arguing that strong confidence and attachment toward family could be a substitute rather than a complement for civic virtues. Generally speaking, in a (amoral) familistic society there is less space left for universal policy measures. For instance, Algan and Cahuc (2006: 1) argued that “(...)Mediterranean European countries are unlikely to be able to implement the Danish [flexicurity] Model because the lack of public-spiritedness of their citizens”. Familism seems to play a role also to explain the extraordinarily high levels of tax evasion and self-employment, as shown by Torrini (2002) in his study about the role of corruption as one of the determinants of cross-country differences in self-employment rates.

The arguments concerning trust and social capital are interesting because they recall not only the ones of Banfield (1958), but also the highly debated ones of Putnam (1993). It is interesting to notice how Italian sociologists have often reacted very badly to those arguments trying to link the North/South divide in socioeconomic outcomes to different family cultures and levels of trust and social capital (Bagnasco et al., 2001; Sciolla, 1997). These authors pointed out that these “culturalist” arguments constitute nothing but a reflux of the Parsons’s view of over-socialized actors (Granovetter, 1985), or, even, just cultural stereotypes lacking of any empirical support. While it is certainly true that Putnam’s analyses (1993), often based on

bivariate macro-correlations, are far from supporting a causal link between civiness and socioeconomic outcomes, more recent works by Guiso et al. (2008b) are much more convincing and showing how the historical path followed by Northern regions (especially, the Putnam's thesis of the role of the free communes during the XIV century) is able to predict current levels of social capital. While the role of trust and social capital on economic growth in comparative perspective has been shown by Tabellini (2010), the reason behind the long-term persistence of these cross-country differences in values has been traced back to the intergenerational transmission of culture (Guiso et al, 2008a; Tabellini, 2007; Bisin and Verdier, 2011).

These results seem to give an answer to the question raised by Esping-Andersen concerning the long-term persistence of institutional settings. Indeed, also differences in family ties have been dated back to the latter part of the Middle Age by the demographer David Reher (1998). The author showed how it was fairly common for an English or a Scandinavian farmer to send his or her child at very young age, usually less than 20, to work as a servant for another family in the neighbouring village. So, it was common in Northern Europe for young men and women to leave the parental home much before marriage. On the opposite, in Southern Europe the practice of circulation of servants was much more uncommon and young men stayed in the parental home until marriage. Marriage patterns were very different then in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries in Northern and Southern Europe, as in the former women and men married relatively late (women at 23 and men at 26 and over) and a fair proportion never married (Hajnal, 1983). According to Reher, the North/South differences in the value and function of the family are strongly related to broader differences in cultural orientations between the Protestant and Catholic parts of Europe, concerning the importance of individualism *vs.* communitarianism, universalism *vs.* familism, the economic independence of young people, traditionalism in sexual behaviours and gender attitudes (1998). In fact, in the following chapters it will be shown how these differences are persistent not only comparing Northern and Southern European countries, but also Northern and Southern regions within Italy.

It may be argued that family systems nowadays do not easily fit within the North/South dichotomy originally suggested by Reher. It is a matter of fact that Reher himself was aware that the North/South divide constitutes a rather simplistic approximation, although useful for analytical reasons, which overrides huge within-countries heterogeneity. However, if we consider three main features distinguishing strong and weak family systems, i.e. the rates of co-residence between children and their parents (both when children are young and adult), the likelihood and amount of intergenerational transfers and the diffusion of new family forms, we can identify a quite large degree of overlap with Reher's findings. Starting from the former, the latest-late age at leaving home of young children is still a widespread feature of Italian and other

Southern European society, with explanations going far beyond mere economic ones, as it will be shown in more detail later on (Aassve et al., 2010; Castiglioni and Dalla Zuanna, 2009). Hank showed how the distinction between Northern, Central and Southern European parents, older than 50 years old, is by far the most powerful predictor of their children's likelihood of coresidence and spatial proximity, net of both parents' and children's socioeconomic characteristics (2007). Moreover, in Southern European countries parents and children are also much more likely to have daily contacts (*ibidem*). The pattern of higher co-residence among adult children with their elderly parents in Southern Europe holds true even if we focus on parents in their '60s and 70s (Albertini et al., 2007). As far as intergenerational transfers, both in terms of financial transfers and care, the latter authors found that "country patterns in intergenerational family transfers suggests the existence of a north-south gradient", results suggesting that "coresidence is *the* Southern European way of transferring resources from parents to children and vice versa [...]. However, in the relatively few cases in which resource exchange does take place between non co-residing parents and children, it tends to be much more intense than in other countries. [...]" (*ibidem*: 325-326). Finally, as far as the diffusion of new family forms, Italy and Southern European countries are the ones with the lowest diffusion of separation and divorces, cohabitations and extra-marital births (Billari and Kohler, 2004), although things are slightly changing since the second half of the '90s (Lesthaeghe, 2010; Billari, 2008).

Coming back to the question raised in the previous paragraph, once recognizing the long-lasting differences in family systems across Europe, it is not difficult to understand why European countries reacted very differently to the common process of increased women's educational attainment and labour market attachment. The male-breadwinner model was popular even in Scandinavian countries during the '50s, but the orientation toward universalistic policy measures targeted to individuals' rather than family needs and the lower focus on families as the core institution to cope with social risks made it easier for them to adopt their institutional settings to reconcile work and family duties, e.g. by means of a universalistic public system of childcare. It is suggested that the latter has been endogenously produced parallel to the revolution in women's role in society and, in fact, in Southern European regions, where traditional gender attitudes still prevail, there is a higher preference for informal (grandparents') childcare rather than formal one (Jappens and Van Bavel, 2011).

In the fifth chapter it will be presented a more detailed historical account of the diverging institutional paths followed by Italy and the Netherlands. Both countries shared the typical fordist welfare regime based on the male-breadwinner norm at least until the end of the '70s. Although in a quite delayed adaptation comparing with Scandinavian countries – it is argued in the chapter that the latter is due to the specific Dutch societal organization called "pillarization" (*Verzuiling*) which influenced the crystallization of the Conservative welfare

regime – starting from the ‘80s the Netherlands shifted to a new equilibrium similar to the Socialdemocratic one²⁴. This shift has been anticipated and shaped by a concomitant change in social and cultural attitudes, following the so-called process of “de-pillarization” (*Ontzuiling*).

But does the role of the cultural dimension on demographic behaviours only works indirectly, i.e. influencing social and family policies? As it has been mentioned in the previous paragraph, “culture” it is referred to not only in term of family norms, as those connected with the strength of family ties, but also of values and preferences toward the family domain which, although strongly related to the former, are more exposed to intergenerational change. The next paragraph shall discuss the issue of the role of preferences and values to understand trends in family behaviours based on the arguments from the SDT.

1.2.3 Preferences, values and their impact on demographic behaviours

According to an important stream of demographic research, it is necessary to distinguish between a *first* and a *Second* Demographic Transition (SDT, van de Kaa 1987; Lesthaeghe and van de Kaa 1986). At the end of the 19th century low fertility was pushed by “structural factors”, i.e. rising opportunity-costs of children due to higher return to human capital and the quantity-quality trade-off (Becker, 1991), rising social security for old age (Caldwell, 1976) and declining child mortality (Doepke, 2005; Kalemli-Ozcan, 2003). On the opposite, changed orientations toward the family domain to achieve full life-satisfaction would constitute a non-redundant explanatory factor underlying the recent patterns of family behaviours – i.e. the increase in cohabitations, couple dissolutions, extra-marital births and below replacement fertility (Surkyn and Lesthaeghe, 2004).

Although van de Kaa (2001) spoke about “post-modernism” as a conceptual framework summarizing what he considers a new *weltanschauung*, his view share several elements of Inglehart’s thesis of intergenerational shift in the values of advanced societies, based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943), which can be summarized with the concept of “post-materialism”²⁵ (1977). The latter refers to the shift from values related to economic and physical security, to values emphasizing autonomy and self-expression. The process represents a sort of

²⁴ Some specific peculiarities in the Dutch institutional settings will be discussed in more detail within the chapter.

²⁵ In van de Kaa’s view “postmodernism can be seen either as encompassing postmaterialism or as a specific value orientation that goes well beyond it. In its first guise postmodernism has a bourgeois dimension. It represents a value orientation of recent vintage that quite ordinary people have now internalized. They assume it is shared by their families and friends, and they do not intend to shock or to be defiant when they express that cultural orientation. In the second guise it has retained an avant-garde dimension. It represents a value orientation held by people who are critical of contemporary society, who seek change and aim to be nonconformist in their behavior” (ibidem: 299).

“reversal” of the trend toward increasing instrumental rationality which, according to Max Weber, characterized the rise of capitalism and bureaucracy (1905). Increasing post-materialism entails a declining authority assigned to the State, Church and traditional male breadwinner families (Inglehart and Appel, 1989) and it is empirically associated with declining economic growth (Granato et al., 1996). A major cultural change is connected with the increasing distance from institutional religions and declining influence of (traditional) religiosity in individuals’ life, a process which has been referred to as “secularization”²⁶ (Inglehart and Norris, 2004).

The thesis of the intergenerational post-materialist shift constitutes a theory of social change which postulates a causal path going from the socioeconomic situation to values and from the latter to demographic behaviours. More precisely, Western societies moved from a pre-modern world, characterized by high fertility, to a modern world, as a result of economic development, which experienced the first demographic transition. This process has been paralleled by the pervading rise of instrumental rationality, embodied in bureaucracy and welfare state structures. As a result, Western societies experienced a generalized well-being and a widespread educational expansion which eventually fostered a decrease in instrumental rationality and an increase in higher-order needs and post-materialism²⁷. New demographic behaviours depicted by the SDT are a consequence of these changed values, which, in turn, were caused by underlying socioeconomic changes. For instance, in the previous paragraphs it has been mentioned how, according to the ETF, the rise of cohabitations and marital instability may be understood with the decreased utility of marriage for highly educated and economically independent women. According to the SDT, it is not increasing educational attainment *per se* that matters, but the change in mentality which came after it²⁸. The same it is true for what concerns the role of modern contraceptive methods to understand sub-replacement fertility: it is not the development of new technology itself, rather the culturally determined will to use it which matters. For instance, it has been shown how a quarter of the demand for the Pill at the regional level in Sweden during the ‘70s can be predicted by the regional rate of extra-marital births in the 19th century as a proxy for the degree of cultural acceptance of pre-marital sex

²⁶ It has been shown how post-materialism and secularization also imply a higher concern about the meaning of life and “spirituality” (Houtman and Mascini, 2002).

²⁷ If the described process of increasing post-materialism due to higher economic well-being seems to apply reasonably well to the fordist period which followed WWII, that does not need to be an irreversible trend. In fact, post-materialism has been shown to be somewhat “pro-cyclical”. So, considering the macroeconomic trends and increasing labour market uncertainty starting from the second half of the ‘90s, it may be that materialist attitudes are on the rise, especially in Southern European countries.

²⁸ For this reason, in the following empirical chapters educational attainment will be treated as a “structural” variable, while “traditional” cultural orientations toward the family domains will be proxied by Italian South-to-North migrants and the mentioned value measures, i.e. religiosity, gender attitudes and post-materialism.

(Ragan, 2012). These results further suggest that the raise in extra-marital births can not be interpreted as a mere reflection of women's economic independence.

There is evidence in the literature that post-materialism, and the connected processes of secularization and gender-equalization, is conducive to higher probability of postponing family formation, experiencing cohabitations and/or marital disruptions, extra-marital births and low fertility, both at the micro and the macro levels (Surkyn and Lesthaeghe, 2004; van de Kaa, 2001), although the effects on fertility seem to be lower than the effects on postponement and new family forms (van de Kaa, 2001; Klein, 1990). As a matter of fact, there is no opposition, in principle, between stressing expressive values or personal autonomy and having children. The problem is that the satisfaction given by parenthood has now important "competitors" such as a successful career, consumerism and pursuing an independent life-style, which determines a delay of binding decisions such as marriage and children (Caldwell and Schindlmayr, 2003; van de Kaa, 2001), which ultimately can lead to lower completed fertility (Billari, 2008).

The cultural reaction against traditional male breadwinner families is another important correlate of post-materialism and the SDT (Inglehart and Appel, 1989). Gender equality, measured in very different ways, has been shown in the literature to have strong effects on female labour market participation and mixed effects on fertility. "Modern" gender roles have been claimed to be crucial factors explaining female labour market participation in the U.S. In this respect, Fernández and Fogli (2009) used second generation immigrants as a proxy for attitudes and found that those women whose parents emigrated to the U.S. from countries with very low female labour market participation are much less likely to be employed, after controlling for all relevant socioeconomic characteristics. The role of gender attitudes is as such that, according to Fortin (2009), they explain about 33% of female labour market participation increase in the U.S. in the last decades, as much as all other variables combined. Gender preferences are interpreted as a cultural feature, and not just as a result of institutional imprinting, because they are transmitted between generations (Fernández and Fogli, 2006). For instance, multivariate analyses showed that a son who grew up in a dual-earner family has about 30% higher probability to have a working wife (Fernández et al., 2002).

Olah (2011) claimed that gender equity should be addressed as a policy objective by governments in order to increase fertility, through a more equal division of domestic and care work. It has been already stressed in the previous section of this chapter the potential role of an equal division of housework to help women reconciliation of work and family duties and how, in Scandinavian countries, this finding has been used to interpret the positive effect of education on higher-order childbirths. More generally, McDonald (2000) suggests that low fertility may be mainly due to low levels of gender equity in institutions that deal with people as members of

families, compared with institutions that deal with people as individuals, an idea similar to the Esping-Andersen's one of "incomplete revolution" (2009).

In a sense, gender equality, also through family-friendly institutional settings, might explain how a country can experience both high fertility as well as female employment rates. For example, at the micro-level, attitudes toward gender roles have been found to have a significant, although ambiguous, influence on fertility in Finland (Miettinen et al., 2011): both "traditional" and gender equal men have been found to have higher fertility comparing with an "intermediate" solution, while among women the effects are negligible.

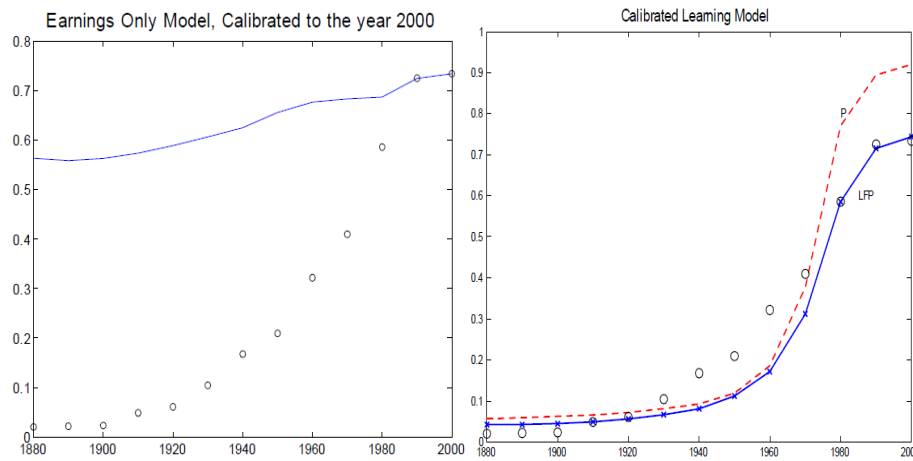
The evidence for religiosity affecting fertility behaviours is much stronger comparing with post-materialism and gender equality. In the Netherlands, religiosity, and especially churchgoing, has been found to be the strongest predictor of the differences in the frequency of higher-order parities between the "Bible belt" and other regions (Sobotka and Adigüzel, 2002). Higher fertility rates in the U.S. are partly due to higher levels of religiosity compared with European countries (Frejka and Westoff, 2006) and Zhang (2008) found that religious beliefs are more important than denomination or church attendance in influencing fertility. In Italy, more religious people (churchgoers) are more likely to experience higher order childbirths (Dalla Zuanna, 2001). Religiosity is also the most important predictor of cohabitations (Di Giulio and Rosina, 2007), while in Spain, church attendance has been found to be an increasingly important predictor of fertility across time (Adsera, 2006). In Austria, religiosity, and especially church attendance, has been found to be a strong predictor of family life trajectories, for instance experiencing cohabitations vs. direct marriage, which are the main determinants of fertility differences (Berghammer, 2012).

These results seem to suggest that preferences toward the family domain, proxied by religiosity, post-materialism and gender attitudes, have an independent effect on behaviours without being just the footprints of institutional settings. However, recalling the distinction between "preferences" – in an economic fashion – and "social norms", these family values are not stable anthropological features like the historically-rooted family systems that have been described above (see paragraph 1.2.1). For instance, Fernández (2007) built a theoretical model to explain trends in female labour market participation in the U.S. since the last years of the 19th century up to the 21st century. The simulation results of this interesting exercise are presented in Fig. 5.

While the first graph shows predicted female labour force participation in the U.S. based only on the dynamics of earnings, whit small circles representing real data, the second one shows trends in beliefs (the red dotted line) and predicted female labour force participation

based on a learning model, taking into account both earning and beliefs trends, which is able to reproduce the observed “S-shaped” pattern.

Fig. 5 Predicted female labour force participation in the U.S.



Source: Fernández (2007)

This is an example of how fast preferences can adopt according to the spread of information and imitation mechanisms: at the beginning of the SDT few women work and it takes time for individuals to accept the new behaviour, for instance understanding that the costs of working, e.g. the fact that children may suffer if the mother works, are much lower than the benefits, as argued by Fogli and Veldkamp (2011). Then the information spread through social networks and female labour market participation strongly increases, until beliefs become widely recognized. In Scandinavian countries, the same kind of mechanism has worked behind the diffusion of cohabitations and extra-marital births, as we will see.

If there is empirical evidence of intergenerational shifts in values and preferences, such as post-materialism, religiosity and gender attitudes, and the latter are correlated with female labour market participation and family behaviours at the micro-level, it is possible then to add those factors as additional explanatory factors of trends toward declining fertility in OECD countries. But, in order to claim that changing values and attitudes have a direct impact on trends of demographic behaviours, the causality issue has to be considered carefully. As a matter of fact, it has been mentioned how researchers involved in the field of cultural economics relied on migrations as an exogenous source of cultural heterogeneity in the host society, a strategy that will be applied in chapters three and four of this thesis as well.

However, there is some empirical evidence showing that values and attitudes, even when suffering from important reliability problems as in the case of Inglehart’s postmaterialist index, have a large degree of stability within individuals’ life (de Graaf et al., 1989). This seems

to hold also as far as religiosity is concerned. For instance, it has been shown how the crucial period of individuals' "adjustment" in religious orientations, after having being shaped during the socialization process by the family, the religious community and peers, takes place during the early adulthood (Cornwall, 1988). By applying event-history analysis, Need and de Graaf (1996) argue that after individuals reach the age of 21, religiosity becomes quite stable. The general conclusion in favour of the stability of religiosity during the life-cycle is reinforced by those empirical analyses that tried to disentangle age and cohort effects using repeated cross-sectional studies. In fact, it has been suggested that in Britain and in the Netherlands there are no hints suggesting that people become more religious when they age (de Graaf and Te Grotenhuis, 2008; Crocket and Voas, 2006).

If these value measures can be considered as constant over the life-cycle, the causality claims are of course reinforced. However, other empirical evidence based on panel data shows that, as far as religiosity, age effects are actually relevant and especially among Catholic females (Argue et al., 1999; Chaves, 1989; Hout and Greeley, 1987)²⁹. It has been suggested that the family formation process "sets in train a sequence of social roles that encourages religiosity" (Argue et al., 1999: 434). If this is the case, the problems concerning the direction of the causal link between family events and religiosity needs to be taken into account and I refer to chapter four for a more detailed theoretical discussion and some empirical strategies to cope with the issue.

The causality concerns are even trickier with respect to the causal effect of gender attitudes on women's labour market decisions. However, the reported evidence that husbands' probability to have a working wife is much higher if the former's mother worked suggest long-lasting and exogenous effects of gender attitudes on women's behaviours as well. The empirical strategy of analyzing the impact of husbands' attitudes on their wives' behaviours will be applied in chapter five.

1.2.4 *The need for the integration and interaction of cultural, economic and institutional factors to understand recent fertility trends*

In the previous paragraph it has been shown how, according to Inglehart's and SDT's theses, trends of changing values and preferences may spread very easily within and across

²⁹ If one considers the role of predestination in Protestantism vis-a-vis the Catholic possibility of salvation through contrition, it may be understandable why Catholics are prone to become more religious while ageing. Generally speaking, Stark and Bainbridge's theory of religious compensators (1987) may help to explain higher religiosity at older ages (religiosity as "primary compensator" to exorcize the fear of death) and especially among women in Catholic countries as they have a more direct obligation for caregiving (religiosity as a "secondary compensator" for the material caregiving they can not provide anymore directly to their offspring).

societies, as we have seen in the case of gender attitudes in the U.S. If this is the case, one might argue why we still observe huge cross-country differences both in values as well as demographic and women's labour market behaviours. Moreover, even taking into account the cultural dimension behind fertility, at a first glance this does not help to understand the very low fertility rates in Southern European countries, as the latter are well-known as the most traditionally oriented in terms of religiosity and gender attitudes (Castles, 2003). Moreover, as it will be discussed in more detail in the fourth chapter, exactly in Southern Europe value orientations such as religiosity and gender attitudes are expected to matter more in terms of behavioural consequences. In sum, as mentioned concerning the Economic Theory of the Family and welfare regimes, apparently even the Second Demographic Transition and its cultural correlates do not help much in understanding recent fertility trends, at least in terms of cross-country differences.

However, precisely those conditions which foster the micro-level relevance of values and attitudes may help explaining the low fertility of traditional Southern European countries. As mentioned in the introduction to the thesis and discussed in previous paragraphs, a first attempt to explain this paradox relies on the different institutional settings which foster work-family reconciliation and gender equality within households. But it has also been argued how welfare regimes and the new gender-equal equilibrium are deeply endogenous to features of national cultures.

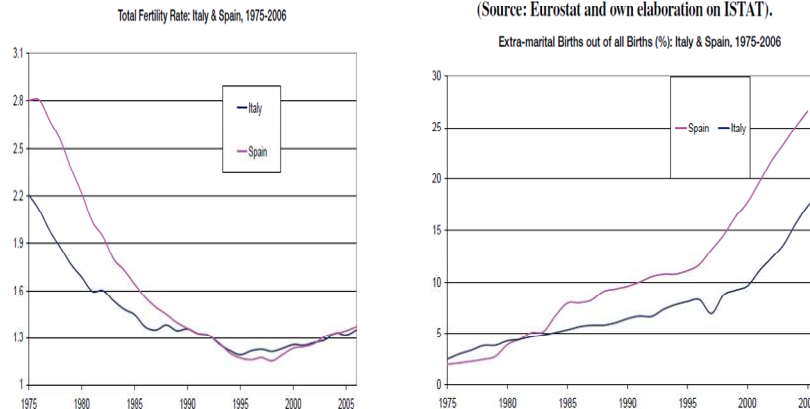
It is argued here that, apart from indirect effects mediated by the lack of social and family policies to reconcile work and family duties, also a direct influence of the normative structure of Southern European countries on low fertility can be hypothesized. In this respect, strong family ties typical of those countries would work as a filter hindering the adoption of "modern" values, new demographic behaviours and the process toward a full integration of women in the labour market, which in turn affect low fertility rates. As Castles pointed out, "the preference change that has delivered the general trend to lower fertility has simultaneously guaranteed that the countries with the highest rates of fertility will be those most willingly embracing the implications of recent cultural and economic change" (2003: 226).

A way to prove the last sentence is to show conditions under what conditions Italy and Spain, the first European countries reaching lowest-low fertility rates (Kohler et al., 2002), are recently experiencing a "new demographic spring" (Dalla Zuanna, 2005). In Fig. 6, trends in TFRs and extra-marital births as a percentage of total births in Italy and Spain are presented. The figure shows how fertility started to increase in the second half of the '90s concomitantly with a huge and sudden increase of extra-marital births, and the same is true concerning marital instability (Billari, 2008). Somewhat recalling the sudden increase of female labour market

participation in the U.S. as a consequence of changing beliefs, these findings suggest that the SDT which occurred decades ago in Northern countries is now going beyond Alps and Pyrenees, natural borders of the strong family systems (Reher, 1998). And if we looked in more detail these recent trends, we would see that the latter entail only the most economically advanced regions in Italy and Spain, i.e. Lombardy and Catalonia.

Fig. 6 TFRs and extra-marital births in Italy and Spain

Figure 2. Total Fertility Rate: Italy & Spain, 1975-2006 (Source: INE and ISTAT). Figure 3. Extra-marital Births out of all Births: Italy & Spain, 1975-2006 (Source: Eurostat and own elaboration on ISTAT).



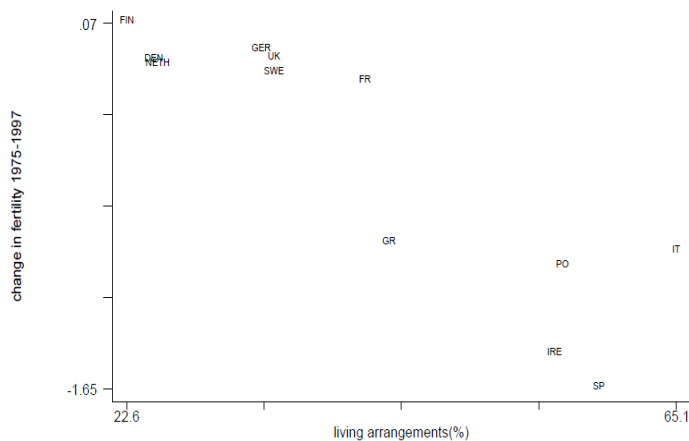
Source: Billari (2008)

Adopting a “spatial diffusion” theory of the SDT (Lesthaeghe and Neels, 2002) and the above-mentioned idea that beliefs are transmitted by social networks (Fogli and Veldkamp, 2011), the dense family structures would have worked like an obstacle in the adaptation of these new behaviours (for an application of a diffusion theory to the spread of cohabitations in Europe, see Nazio and Blossfeld, 2003). As shown in the literature concerning Italy (Di Giulio and Rosina, 2007; Rosina and Fraboni, 2004), young people do not leave the parental home to start a cohabitation without parental approval, which is clearly understandable from a rational perspective as well, for family is an important provider of welfare in Italy. Only when parental attitudes toward cohabitation started to change the diffusion of the new behaviours could start (*ibidem*; Castiglioni and Dalla Zuanna, 2009), at least in the more “advanced” Northern regions. Interestingly, if we include the role of immigrant flows in the picture (Billari, 2008), it can be argued that fertility rates increased under the influence of cultural factors of opposite nature. On the one hand, non-traditional family forms have been crucial fertility boosters while, on the other hand, immigrants from high fertility countries, holding traditional family structures, constitute important demographic reservoirs of many industrialized countries. In this respect, Sobotka estimated the net effect of migrations on TFRs to be about .1 across European countries (2008), which may seem relatively small, but the figure varies a lot across countries and regions

within countries (see for instance the case of Northern Italy, Castiglioni and Dalla Zuanna, 2009).

These findings allow for an interpretation of the way national cultures and family systems influence fertility rates which is not mediated by the intervenient role of family policies but that nevertheless requires to take seriously into account the interactions between economic change, institutional settings and the cultural dimension. As it has been mentioned in the first part of this chapter, in Italy we observe a strict sequencing of the steps toward the transition to adulthood. More precisely, no other paths toward parenthood have been available but marriage for decades, even for centuries according to the historical accounts presented in the paragraph 1.2.2, with cohabitations and extra-marital births being extremely rare events until the second half of the '90s. Also favoured by the longer and longer permanence into the educational system and the increasing economic uncertainty, what can observe that, concomitantly to the drop in fertility, Southern European countries have experienced a huge increase of the age at leaving the parental home starting from the end of the '70s (see Fig. 7a). And leaving home at late ages seems to be strongly determined by culture as second generation immigrants tend to reproduce the pattern of behaviour prevalent in the country of origin (Fig. 7b), also controlling for socioeconomic characteristics.

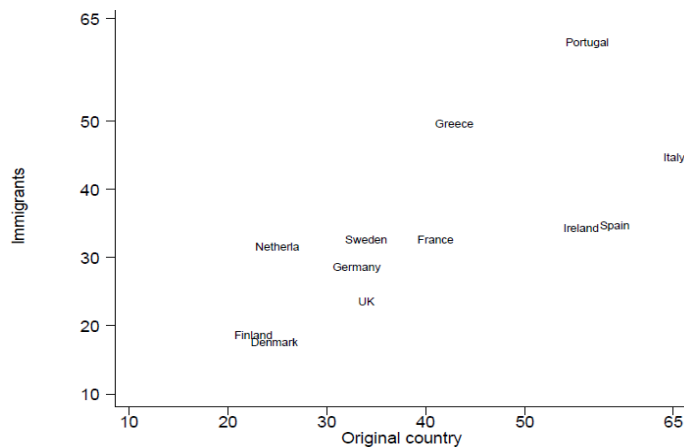
Fig. 7a Cross-country correlation between the change in fertility (1975-1997) and living arrangements in 1997



Source: Giuliano (2010)

This is a first result that countries with strong family ties and conservative attitudes in terms of gender roles and sexual behaviours might have limited the increase in female labour market participation and determined low fertility not only through the institutional settings but also directly, interacting with wider socioeconomic changes.

Fig. 7b Percentage of young (18-33) living at home according to country of residence and country of origin (for second generation immigrants in the U.S.) in 1997



Source: Giuliano (2010)

For instance, the fordist crisis and rising unemployment rates might have produced a stronger “Malthusian reaction” in Southern European countries than elsewhere (Dalla Zuanna, 2001)³⁰. A combination of high value attached to both children and consumption aspirations in a period of rising economic uncertainty might have pushed Southern European families to invest more in children’s quality instead of quantity (*ibidem*). In fact, having more children affect the life chances of the offspring, especially in terms of their investments in human capital (Dalla Zuanna, 2001, 2006)³¹. So, parents’ decision to have only one child, but also reducing third and higher-order childbirths, might constitute the mechanism to assure him/her better chances of social mobility as well as a high level of consumption within the parental home, without asking the offspring much contribution to the household chores³². Moreover, following the sexual

³⁰ According to Reher (1998: 205): “[...] in Spain and in many other southern European countries, a stable job, access to adequate housing, leaving the parental household, and marriage tend to be closely intertwined events. In fact, an excellent indicator of the labor market and unquestionably the best one for the rate of family formation in southern Europe would be the incidence of first marriages among young adults”.

³¹ This siblings effect has been found to be related more to the *order* of childbirths rather than to the *number* itself (Black et al., 2005), although in Italy the latter could be relevant as well, given the higher costs of children comparing with other European countries (Dalla Zuanna, 2001) and the lack of family policies.

³² Among Italian individuals aged 15-24 and living at home (96% in the selected age group), only about 10% of boys deal with housework such as doing the washing or ironing at least occasionally, while the same figures are about 50% among girls (IARD, 2004, own elaboration). As a matter of fact, the

revolution of the 70's and more liberal parental attitudes, privacy costs of living at home strongly reduced (Giuliano, 2010).

These behavioural patterns are consistent with those of Southern Italian people who migrated in Australia during the XXth century. Their marriage rates were higher and divorce rates lower, attitude toward gender roles strongly traditional and children used to leave parental home (for marriage) later than children within the native population (Santow and Bracher, 1999). This family pattern was connected to higher fertility among the first migration flows but, after the '60s, Italian born families' fertility rates started to decline even below the native's ones, although the other features of the Southern European family remained largely unchanged (*ibidem*). These results are confirmed by a more recent report of second generation immigrants in Australia (Khoo et al., 2002), where it is shown how native Australians with both parents who have migrated from Southern Europe tend to avoid cohabitations and extra-marital births and experience fertility rates even lower than third (or more) generation Australians. Italian and Greek first and second generation migrants (in Australia as well as in the U.S.) constitute an extraordinary example of how strong may be the effects of the cultural dimension on demographic behaviours, especially among the Greek (see Tab. 4), likely due to the higher rate of group in-marriage among both first and second generation migrants (Jones and Luijckx, 1996). The fertility drop depicted in Fig. 7a observed in home countries is observable among Southern European migrants as well, differently from natives and migrants from G.B. Even second generation migrants, regardless of the long exposition to the new cultural setting and much higher levels of out-marriages, are found not only to avoid cohabitations and extra-marital births, but they also eventually have lower completed fertility than natives³³.

I mentioned how childbirths may be not "allowed" in conditions different from a stable union and a complete economic independency, which includes house ownership, from the family of origin. In this respect, Micheli (2011) claimed that the Mediterranean pattern of family ties excludes "any scenario of revolving door" between the family of origin and the new family (*ibidem*: 15). The author argues that such a characteristic distinguishes Mediterranean areas from the rest of the "Continental South of Europe" (Northern Italy, Northern Spain, parts of Austria and West-Germany): in the latter, individuals more often leave the parental home before marriage, but being aware that their "real" home "is that of my parents. To tell the truth, I don't feel I

postponement of leaving home is a peculiarity of both Italian men and women, but differences with other European countries are particularly striking among the former (Sobotka and Toulemon, 2008; Billari et al., 2001). These gendered socialization models may also constitute the cultural foundation of the unequal division of domestic work among Italian couples.

³³ It should be underlined that the results are robust to important socioeconomic factors: second generation migrants from Greece and Italy reach even higher socioeconomic outcomes, e.g. higher educational attainment, lower unemployment rates and higher social class, than their counterparts from U.K. and other Western countries (Khoo et al., 2002).

belong in either one or the other”, as a single woman said three years after she left home. On the opposite, in Southern Italy a woman said that, when she decided to leave home to get married, “my parents backed me but said that once I went down that road, there was no turning back...” (*ibidem*). This may also explain why Albertini et al. (2007) found that parents’ likelihood of giving and receiving intergenerational transfers to their non-coresident children is lower in Southern European countries comparing with Central and Northern ones.

Tab. 4 Demographic behaviours of first and second generation migrants in Australia				
	Greece-born in Australia (home country)	Italy-born in Australia (home country)	G.B.-born in Australia (home country)	Australia-born
<i>Total Fertility Rate</i>				
1977-1981	2.2 (2.2)	2.1 (1.7)	1.7 (1.8)	1.9
1982-1986	1.7 (1.8)	2.0 (1.4)	1.7 (1.8)	1.9
1987-1991	1.5 (1.4)	1.6 (1.3)	1.6 (1.8)	1.8
	Gen-2 Greek in Australia	Gen-2 Italian in Australia	Gen-2 G.B. in Australia	Gen-3> Australian
% living in <i>parents’ home</i> (individuals aged 25-29, 1996)	38 (women), 43 (men)	30 (women), 41 (men)	11 (women), 16 (men)	12 (women), 10 (men)
<i>Cohabitations</i> as % of stable unions (individuals aged 25-29, 1996)	1 (women), 3 (men)	2 (women), 6 (men)	25 (women), 31 (men)	22 (women), 29 (men)
Mean number of <i>children</i> ever born for never married women (aged 25-29, 1996)	.03	.04	.43	.48
Mean number of <i>children</i> (women aged 35-44, 1996)	1.80	1.97	2.08	2.2

Source: Khoo et al. (2002), Abbasi-Shavazi and McDonald (2001)

When leaving home is subjected to such a normative and economic pressure, it is not difficult to understand the “latest-late” pattern of leaving home in Southern Europe (Billari et al., 2001). Moreover, the contradiction between conservative values like religiosity and low fertility might be explained because it has been shown how religiosity is connected with the societal norm about the “right” age at leaving home (Aassve et al., 2010). Apart from the constraints set by parents and the “outside” world, young people in Southern Europe are often very reluctant themselves to leave the parental home and become independent, as they can enjoy much freedom and high consumption levels within the family, without contributing much to the housework (Giuliano, 2010).

This discussion concerning the transition to adulthood is relevant both from a substantive and an epistemological perspective. Starting from the former, it has been noticed

how the postponement (*tempo*) effects play an important role to understand patterns of lowest-fertility in Southern Europe, although we have seen that Spain and Italy are exiting from this condition. Therefore, an understanding of the relations between the postponement of leaving home, the diffusion of cohabitations and extra-marital births may be crucial to a sociological interpretation of reproductive behaviours in Italy and Southern Europe.

From a wider theoretical perspective, these phenomena clearly require a strong integration of “structural” and “cultural” factors. For instance, Fogli (2004) recognizes the strong credit constraints faced by young people in Southern Europe, a factor which also reduces residential mobility (Caldera Sánchez and Andrews, 2011). In this setting, the author concludes that high job protection for the insiders is a way for young people to enjoy household consumption staying at home and getting rid of financial constraints. Although the explanation is perfectly sound, it cannot be fully understood without embedding it into the frame of the strong family system, as it has been argued in paragraph 1.2.2 about the endogeneity of job protections of the (male breadwinner) insider with respect to the family culture. Labour market regulation indeed allows low geographical mobility which would be costly in presence of strong family ties (Alesina et al., 2010). However, although we have seen how the mechanisms behind leaving home are strongly reinforced by normative pressures, it is impossible not to recall the detrimental effects of labour market precariousness and youth unemployment on leaving home in Southern European countries, which in turn reinforce norms concerning the acceptable age at leaving home (Aassve et al., 2010), thus creating a very dangerous short-circuit between economic, institutional and cultural factors.

The integration of the different accounts discussed in this chapter is even more needed after having recognized how none of them alone, either based on structural factors at the individual level (Economic Theory of the Family), cultural factors at the individual and societal level (Second Demographic Transition theory and family cultures) or institutional settings, is sufficient to understand the recent trends in female labour market participation and fertility. The criticisms concerning the ETF have been already discussed based on the rise of a new gender-equal equilibrium and women’s will to combine paid work and children. However, it has been shown how welfare regimes shape women’s likelihood to reconcile work and family duties, so that Becker’s specialization thesis may still work in countries belonging to the Mediterranean model, although it is going to be more and more useless as a tool to understand fertility trends. Certainly more relevant as an economic factor at the micro-level is the recent rise in labour market precariousness, which it has been mentioned in the first section of this chapter as one of the main causes of the postponement of the transition to the first child among younger generations of Southern European individuals.

A mere explanation of cross-country differences in female labour market participation and fertility rates based on the exogenous role of welfare regimes would overlook the endogeneity of the latter with respect to the adoption of new family behaviours and changed women's role in society. While it is difficult to disentangle the cultural endogeneity of welfare regimes in cross-country comparisons, there is empirical evidence suggesting that childcare availability works differently across regions within countries based on cultural differences such as the acceptance of the dual-earner family and extra-marital births. The argument is reinforced since results have been found in very different contexts such as Spain (Baizán, 2009) and Sweden (Krapf, 2009). It is interesting to mention how this link between new family forms and family policies may hold even when comparing Northern and Southern Italian regions, for it has been mentioned how in Northern regions fertility rates started to increase concomitantly with the rise of new family forms. And, in the same time-span, many Northern Italian regions have also endowed themselves with part-time jobs and public childcare services (Del Boca and Rosina, 2009; Del Boca, 2002).

Other cultural factors at the individual levels, as those mentioned referring to the SDT thesis, may help to understand OECD trends of increasing female labour market participation and declining fertility rates, but they hardly explain why countries where “traditional” values are more persistent have lower fertility rates.

Going through this critical review of the literature discussed within the chapter, it is possible to find a *trait d'union* between most of the above-mentioned criticisms which is based on cross-country cultural differences with respect to family cultures. Countries with strong family ties have historically relied on the family as the core institution to cope with social risks, thus explaining why there is still a limited focus on social and family policies to reconcile work and family duties. The latter have been claimed to be theoretically relevant to understand the positive cross-country correlation between female labour market participation and fertility, but it has been mentioned how they can not be seen as having mere exogenous effects on those outcomes, again shaped by the acceptance of new family values. Strong family ties indeed hindered the process of intergenerational cultural change posited by Inglehart and the SDT.

Consequently, it has been suggested that low fertility in Southern European countries may depend precisely on the features of the family system, some of the mechanisms being the late children's departure from the parental home and the slow diffusion of new family forms and extra-marital births. However, although the peculiar pattern of family behaviours in Southern Europe have been confirmed also through the analysis of second generation migrants, there is very limited empirical evidence to corroborate a causal link between family ties and fertility behaviours. In fact, it is difficult to assess what one would mean by “strength of family ties” and

how the latter should be measured at the individual or aggregate level. Especially from the first perspective, the attempt made by Alesina and Giuliano (2010) may be too simplistic both methodologically and substantively, for it is hard to assume that the proposed indicators are able to differentiate individuals in terms of attitudes toward different family arrangements and intergenerational transfers and contacts³⁴. Although it may be theoretically more appropriate to study the effects of family norms by means of proxies at the aggregate (regional) level, where they have been found to have most of their predictive power (Jappens and Van Bavel, 2011; Aassve et al., 2010; Krapf, 2009), there is no empirical evidence connecting strong family ties and lower fertility. An alternative attempt would be to use the diffusion of some behaviours such as early age at leaving home, cohabitation and extra-marital births rates, but few systematic and longitudinal studies are available, although suggesting for a positive causal link between the diffusion of these behavioural proxies of family norms and fertility rates (Luci and Thévenon, 2011) which is increasing over time (Prskawetz et al., 2010). Moreover, these studies are macro-macro analyses, while cutting-edge contributions aimed at integrating the outlined structural and cultural factors will have to entail a multilevel and longitudinal methodological approach.

1.2.5 Policy design and social preferences

The objective of this section has been to discuss about the theoretical and empirical relevance of augmenting standard socioeconomic analysis of demographic behaviours with a cultural foundation of both institutional settings and individuals' choices. In this paragraph it is argued how the latter strategy may be very useful not only to understand social phenomena like the latest-late age at leaving home, the diffusion of cohabitation and fertility behaviours, but also to orientate policy design. As a matter of fact, it is useful for empirical research trying to answer family-related research questions relying primarily on economic and institutional circumstances as “proximate” causes, because policy makers may hardly act to modify preferences and social norms, while the proper incentives may help to foster more “efficient” behaviours even in presence of strong normative pressures.

However, in order for a policy design to be effective, it is crucial to be aware of the potential intervening role of such a cultural dimension. Moreover, it is arguable to what extent

³⁴ In the cited paper, the authors measure family ties by means of individuals' reported importance of the family (ranging from 1 to 4), whether they agree with one of the two statements “Regardless of what the qualities and faults of one's parents are, one must always love and respect them”/“One does not have the duty to respect and love parents who have not earned it” and whether they agree with one of the two statements “It is the parents' duty to do their best for their children even at the expense of their own well being/Parents have a life of their own and should not be asked to sacrifice their own well being for the sake of their children”.

policies should really restrain from the idea of changing inefficient preferences, at least indirectly³⁵. For instance, Alesina and Ichino (2009), after having recognized the role played by the Italian family culture on the high level of gender inequalities within the household and on the labour market, propose a reduction of income taxes for women, comparing with men, as a policy reform. The latter may work not only as an incentive for female labour market participation, especially for women with young children, but it is also meant as a measure to redistribute paid and unpaid work across genders, somewhat compensating for men's opportunity-costs for the time spent in housework activities. Beyond the economic rationale, the authors also rely on the change in mentality, in terms of "modern" attitudes toward the gender roles, that increasing female labour market participation would cause, which may have positive consequences also in terms of fertility. Once recognizing the unequal division of domestic work as a culturally-driven inequality, it is morally justifiable, according to the authors, a measure apparently discriminatory like the one proposed.

Apart from too much relying on wishful thinking, one might argue about the effective role of alternative measures, such as an increase of public childcare provisions, on female labour market participation *and* fertility in Southern European countries. As Algan and Cahuc noticed (2005), if in this area the large majority of people thinks that pre-school children suffer if the mother works, and this finding is related to culture not as a merely "super-structure" of the institutional and economic environment, then such a policy option may behave very poorly and maybe without being welfare improving. A similar consideration has been done by Billari and Tabellini (2010) with respect to policies helping Italian young people to leave earlier the family of origin. Although the authors show that a late age at leaving home is connected with lower wages in adulthood, Italian young people may be aware of this loss and not be willing to "exchange" a higher income with an earlier exit from the parental home.

Some empirical analyses suggest how increasing public provisions of childcare could be more effective on female labour market participation, as a reconciliation measure for those who did decide to work *and* have children, rather than fertility rates (Del Boca et al., 2008; Del Boca and Wetzels, edited by, 2007). More importantly, it has been discussed in the previous paragraph about the endogeneity of family policies with respect to cultural orientations toward

³⁵ Changing "people's preferences" as a policy target has been connected with the political practice of dictatorships such as Nazism and Communism (Bisin, 2010). Apart from noticing how mass media, even soap operas, are usually free to shape people preferences, also influencing fertility behaviours (La Ferrara, 2008), I think this provocative comment is just not addressing the problem in a correct way. What the policy maker can do is to inform people about the consequences of their preferences and provide a set of opportunities to conciliate work and family as wide as possible, with an important focus on fostering gender equality, as it has been done by the Dutch policy maker in the last 20 years (Knijn and Saraceno, 2010). In fact, any kind of one-size-fits-all policy intervention in the field of family behaviours embodies and impose, to some extent, a family ideal (Neyer and Andersson, 2008; Hakim, 2006).

family. Therefore, a measure like the one proposed by Alesina and Ichino (2009) and increasing the availability of good quality part-time jobs might be more effective and welfare improving in the Southern European setting, especially in the short term. Such a policy option may be considered non “gender-neutral” comparing with the Scandinavian solution based on the full-time inclusion of women in the labour market, although largely segregated in the public sector. While the issue will be treated in more detail in the last chapter of thesis when comparing the Italian and Dutch paths toward dual-earner families, I have to conclude this first chapter recognizing how, irrespective of recipients’ preferences, the choice between alternative family policies is always value-loaded.

Chapter 2: Fertility and work-family reconciliation in Italy from a “structural” perspective³⁶

Summary

This chapter will present longitudinal analyses aimed at showing the strong trade-off between work and family faced by Italian women in the light of the familialistic Italian institutional setting, i.e. the lack of public childcare for children aged less than three and flexible labour market arrangements. Adopting the theoretical framework discussed in the first chapter, the analyses will show the gendered micro- and meso-consequences of such an institutional setting as far as the transition to parenthood and female labour market participation around childbirths are concerned. The focus will be not only on gender differences but also on changes across cohorts.

The first part of the chapter will show how the transition to a first child is strongly dependent on men’s economic resources and earning potentials both in the fordist and in post-fordist periods. In recent times, however, women’s economic role became less in opposition with the transition to parenthood. It is argued that this is mainly due not to changes neither in policies fostering reconciliation of work and family duties nor in the degree of husbands’ support in housework, but to the increased financial needs to start a family and women’s “decision” to reduce family size.

Indeed, the analysis of female labour market participation showed how the latter increased across cohorts almost completely as an effect of the changed women’s composition in terms of educational attainment and to the detriment of fertility rates. Highly educated women with only one child are the only who have been able to increase significantly their level of participation. The latter have also become more likely to leave the labour market at the childbirth and to re-enter, as an effect of higher preferences for combining work and family, so that increasing participation is connected with higher career discontinuity. Moreover, among younger cohorts of women labour market participation has also become independent from husbands’ educational and economic resources, confirming the results concerning the transition to motherhood. Although few women really schedule their labour market participation according to childbirth(s), as most women either work before and after a childbirth or never enter the labour market, results suggest the increasing important role of women’s own earning potentials as a shield against labour market withdrawals. Those kind of jobs in which the combination of work and family duties is facilitated, e.g. employment in the agricultural or public sectors, are connected with lower risk of withdrawals as well. As the crucial moments for women’s participation decisions are the months immediately before and after childbirths, policies like a higher availability of good quality part-time jobs and childcare services are very likely to have a positive effect on Italian female labour market participation rates.

Increased educational attainment fostered women’s labour market integration, but this happened at the price of reduced family size, given the lack of institutional and partners’ support to conciliate work and family duties. While the findings give clear indications in terms of policies aimed at a de-familialization of the Italian welfare regime, it is also argued how the Italian pattern of low fertility and female labour market participation may not be fully understood without including in the framework values and preferences.

³⁶ The realisation of this chapter has profited by a five weeks visiting period at the Tilburg University (May-June 2010). I thank Prof. Ruud Luijkx who supervised my work during my stay in the Netherlands. A version of this chapter has been presented at the 2010 EqualSoc Summer School (Trento, 23-27 August) and the 2010 EqualSoc Workshop “Changing Families and Work in Europe” (Trento, 25-26 June).

Introduction and Research Hypotheses

The aim of the first empirical chapter of the thesis is to show to what extent features of the institutional setting affect Italian women's difficult work-life balance, thus contributing to low fertility rates. The analyses presented here constitute an application to the Italian case of the theoretical framework outlined in the first part of the theoretical chapter, so the focus will be on micro(individual)- and meso(familiar)-mechanisms connected with social stratification (education and social class) and their changes across cohorts. At the end of empirical analyses, a discussion will follow in order to summarize the main findings and to address in which ways the "cultural" dimension might contribute to explain the Italian pattern of low fertility and female labour market participation.

Applying the structural approach discussed in the first chapter, Italy can be presented as an ideal-type of the Mediterranean welfare regime, with an institutional setting characterized by the almost complete lack of policy measures to reconcile work and family duties, especially a very limited universalistic public provision of childcare for children aged less than three, and limited part-time employment (Reyneri, 2008). Moreover, women's reconciliation is burdened by a very unequal gendered division of housework (OECD, 2011). After the second half of the '80s, in addition to these institutional obstacles to achieve the fertility rates of Central and Northern European countries, the situation has been worsened by the so called "partial and targeted" labour market deregulation and its consequences in terms of precarious labour market careers. The aggregate outcomes of (lowest-)low fertility and low female labour market participation rates and the peculiar pattern of female labour market participation around childbirth(s), implying relatively low exit rates and a very difficult re-entering in the labour market after withdrawals, are interpreted as stemming from the institutional factors just mentioned (see Tab. 1).

The theoretical framework outlined in the first chapter allows for some precise predictions concerning meso- and micro-level mechanisms as well. The empirical analysis will stick to the analytical distinction between the two "causal" paths (from "work" to "family" and from "family" to work") presented in Tab. 1-3. Concerning the first path connecting education and labour market careers to family behaviours, this chapter will focus on the transition to the first child, while the transition to the second child will be treated in the next chapter. Tab. 2 allows making the following predictions about the effects of education and earning potentials in the Italian setting:

- a) strong negative effects of educational enrolment and level on the time to first child, but stronger among women;
- b) the field of study works according to a gendered pattern: while “strong” fields of study (technical or scientific) have positive effects among men, the effects are negative among women;
- c) positive effects of employment and social class among men and strong negative effects of those measures of earning potentials among women;
- d) across cohorts, both the effects of the educational and employment resources are becoming more equal across genders.

The last hypothesis points toward a decreasing prevalence of the male breadwinner family in the Italian setting, as hypothesized at the end of the paragraph 1.1.3b. As mentioned, this expectation is justified by more recent empirical evidence and by the recognition that, after the fordist crisis and with the flexibilization of the Italian labour markets, it is much more difficult for men to perform their “breadwinner” role and two earners in the household are more and more needed for the transition to parenthood. This may be due not only to the important role of the additional income, but also to a more equal division of paid and unpaid work in dual-earner families (Mencarini, 2007). Of course policy and cultural changes in the direction of a more gender-equal pattern of division of paid and unpaid work may be relevant here as well, but it will be shown that there are only weak signals going in this direction in the Italian setting.

Shifting to the second “path” going from “family” to “work”, the hypotheses concerning female labour market participation around childbirth(s) in Italy, which can be drawn from Tab. 3, are the following:

- a) women’s education and earning potentials are strong predictors of their labour market attachment;
- b) the increase of female labour market participation across cohorts is mainly due to a compositional effect in terms of rising educational attainment, which is related to declining fertility given the strong trade-off between career and family in the Italian setting;
- c) also other characteristics of the job fostering the reconciliation of work and family duties decrease women’s probability to leave the labour market, thus signalling the need for more flexible labour market arrangements;
- d) husbands’ resources have negative effects of women’s labour market attachment, but less among younger cohorts.

As described in the comparative analysis of the previous chapter, in a context where female labour market participation is far from being supported by policies or husbands, both husbands' and women's own cultural and economic resources are expected to matter a lot. Moreover, those jobs which allow for a better integration of work within the family life, e.g. employment in the public or the agricultural sectors, are also expected to keep women on the labour market.

Parallel to the effect of women's economic resources on the transition to the first child, it can be hypothesized a decreasing negative effect of husbands' cultural and economic resources on women's likelihood to participate in the labour market, with an explanation largely overlapping the one given to understand the weakening of the work-family trade-off in the transition to first motherhood.

Before presenting the data and methods used for the analyses, some caveats of the chosen analytical strategy are worth discussing. As already mentioned in the introduction to the paragraph 1.1.3 in the first chapter, individuals' decisions concerning education, labour market participation and fertility are endogenous to each other, so that the analyses should be seen as primarily of a descriptive nature. This is even more true in view of the fact that patterns of parameter estimates will be compared across cohorts, for many (structural and cultural) unobservable changes may occur and make the interpretation of the results somewhat tricky.

Therefore, even if the hypotheses have been drawn based on a theoretical framework supported by a large amount of empirical references, it is still possible that mechanisms different to the ones suggested here are responsible for the observed pattern of results.

Nevertheless, the inclusion of the Italian case in a wide comparative framework has been meant precisely to help giving a safer interpretation of the results. What the hypotheses suggest is that even in Italy the male-breadwinner model is losing ground, but this transition is hindered, and occurring at the expenses of fertility rates, by the lack of institutional adaptations to changed women's behaviours. In this view one might interpret, if empirically corroborated, the hypotheses of decreasing women's dependence on men's resources and the increasing labour market participation and decreasing fertility rates of highly educated women, compared to low educated ones. In this chapter concerned with a "structural" perspective on the issue of fertility and work-family reconciliation, only institutional adaptation it is referred to, although it has been discussed in the previous chapter how the latter goes hand in hand with a normative adaptation to the new family forms.

2.1 Introduction to the ILFI Data and Duration Models

To test the above-mentioned hypotheses, duration models will be applied based on a person-month dataset with information about education, work and family life-histories concerning about 6000 individuals in the selected sample. The data have been obtained by merging the 5 available waves of the ILFI survey (Indagine Longitudinale sulle Famiglie Italiane, 1997-2005). The ILFI data cover a time-span going from 1900 to 2005, reconstructed retrospectively between 1900 and 1997 and prospectively between 1997 and 2005. The 1997 retrospective ILFI wave was conducted by the University of Trento and the “Istituto Nazionale di Statistica” (ISTAT). The following waves have been carried out by the Departments of Sociology and Social Research of the University of Milano-Bicocca and the University of Trento, together with the Department of Educational Sciences of the University of Bologna. Data of the first wave have been collected by means of a two-stage stratified sampling procedure, the first stage made by the 8104 Italian municipalities (“*Comuni*”) stratified by region and population size. Then, within the selected municipalities, about 5000 families have been randomly sampled. The survey design implied that all the members of the selected families aged 18 and more should have been interviewed by means of the CAPI procedure. However, only 4404 interviews were successfully carried out, with an average substitution rate of untraceable or non-responding families with secondary sampling units of 33.3%³⁷. Notwithstanding this quite high substitution rate, it should be said that no proxy interviews have been carried out within families and the representativeness of the 1997 dataset with respect to the Italian population in terms of crucial sociodemographic and labour market variables, according to ISTAT data, proved to be quite satisfying (Bernardi and Pisati, 2002)³⁸. As far as the following prospective waves, interviews included also all those family members who reached the age of 18 as well as spin-off families, while there are no signs of important bias due to panel attrition (see <http://www.soc.unitn.it/ilfi/>).

As far as the modelling strategy, duration models will be applied to study the transition to the first parenthood and female labour market participation around childbirths. The same kind of models will be used also in the next chapter. So, it is worth making a brief introduction to the technique and the various forms that can take.

³⁷ Additional information about the sampling procedures is available at this link: <http://www.soc.unitn.it/ilfi/>

³⁸ When it has been impossible to interview all adult individuals within the selected families, the final dataset included all those families in which at least the head of the household was interviewed and at least two individuals in families made by three adults (or three individuals in families made by four or five adults and four individuals in families made by six or more adults).

Duration models constitute a family of statistical techniques aimed at studying the *risk* of experiencing an event, e.g. the risk of experiencing the birth of a child. Such a risk is defined as the probability of occurrence of a certain event at time $t+1$, given that it has not occurred at time t yet, within a specific observational window during which individuals are at risk of experiencing the event. In the language of duration analysis, the risk is defined as a *hazard rate* ($h(t)$), which corresponds to the ratio between the unconditional probability of *failure* at time t and the probability of *survival* at time t . So, the dependent variable of a duration model, in a continuous time setting, is given by

$$h(t) = \frac{f(t)}{S(t)} = \lim_{\Delta t \rightarrow 0} \frac{Pr(t \leq T \leq t + \Delta t | T \geq t)}{\Delta t}$$

which means that $h(t)$ refers to the rate of failure per time unit $[t; t+\Delta t]$ conditional on survival at t . The hazard rate may take many different shapes, i.e. the risk of experiencing an event may increase with the time individuals remain at risk ($h(t)>0$), may decrease ($h(t)<0$) or remain constant ($h(t)=0$). For instance, the functional form of the hazard rate chosen in this chapter when studying the transition to the first parenthood is the *log-logistic* one, which is a standard choice when the hazard rate is expected to be bell-shaped (Blossfeld et al., 2007). The choice of a log-logistic shape of the hazard rate seems quite reasonable since the risk of having a child generally increases with age but after a certain point in time the risk starts to decline³⁹.

Although a correct parametric specification of the hazard rate produces unbiased and more efficient estimates of the regression coefficients, it should be said that the shape of the hazard rate is often difficult to be predicted theoretically, especially after including covariates in the model. In fact, the effect of time, i.e. the *time dependency* of the analysed process, is what can not be explained by the variables included in the model (Golder, unpublished manuscript). For this reason, often the researcher does not want to impose a specific parametric form to the time dependency, relying on some kind of non-parametric specification of the hazard rate. In this chapter, for instance, *piece-wise constant exponential models* have been applied when studying the transition to homemaking among employed women prior to the first childbirth. This choice means that the effect of time is captured by estimating regression coefficients for specific intervals of the time axis, the choice of the latter being the only arbitrary decision imposed by the researcher. If the researcher aims at avoiding any kind of external restriction to

³⁹ The log-logistic distribution for the hazard rate has been chosen also because it scored better, in terms of model fit, than other functional forms. Results proved not to differ much using alternative specifications.

the shape of the time dependency of the analysed processes, the choice will be to adopt *Cox models*, which allows for a fully non-parametrical definition of the hazard rate. The latter will be implemented in the third chapter when studying the transition to the first marriage, the first and the second childbirths of Italian men. The reason here is that, comparing regression coefficients across several nested models for the same transition and across different kinds of transitions, the time dependency may change quite a lot across models so that parametric assumptions should have been adjusted to each of them, making comparisons too much dependent on specification choices.

A short note on the interpretation of regression coefficients. In duration models, the latter can be interpreted very similarly to binary regression models. Given that duration models have as dependent variable the risk of experiencing a certain event, positive coefficients indicate a higher risk (lower duration to the event) associated with the regressors and, if we exponentiate them, we can give the standard interpretation in terms of odds-ratios (hazard ratios). Log-logistic duration models constitute an exception in this respect, as the interpretation of the coefficient is the opposite. These models do not have as dependent variable the duration to the event but the duration at risk, so that positive coefficients, or exponentiated coefficients higher than 1, indicate higher survival rates (higher duration to the event) associated with the regressors.

By now only examples in which the event is expected to occur at any infinitesimal point in time have been considered, but there are many cases in which the researcher may opt for *discrete time duration models*⁴⁰. The latter largely correspond to binary regression models in which the longitudinal structure of the data is taken into account by adding covariates in the regression to model the time dependency and standard errors are clustered within the individuals, in case of repeated observations for each individual, which is necessary when models include variables which change values over time (*time-varying variables*). In this chapter there is an example of discrete time duration model when the results of a probit model applied to the monthly probability of Italian mothers of being employed around first and higher-order childbirths are presented (Figg. 11-13, Tab. 8). In this example, time is modelled with a spline made by four regressors for the time before and time after each childbirth, to grasp linear and quadratic effects. Although the model is based on the same data that previously treated as continuous, discrete time models allow for an easier handling of complex processes with many

⁴⁰ The latter constitute a standard solution when time is available in some grouped time intervals. For instance, unemployment risks after the first entry into the labour market could be thought as a continuous time process, but information may be only available at yearly time intervals. However, a time process may be intrinsically discrete when events can occur only at specific discrete points in time. The distinction has basically no consequences in terms of the statistical modeling (Golder, unpublished manuscript).

time-varying variables and to predict the related quantities of interest, e.g. the probability to be employed two years after the first childbirth for a woman born in a certain cohort and having more than one child. In the following two chapters, when necessary, additional information about the models will be provided when presenting the results of each analysis.

2.2 The Gendered Pattern of the Transition to the First Child in Italy Across Cohorts

2.2.1 Data, variables and methods

In this chapter, when studying the transition to the first parenthood, log-logistic duration models have been applied. The observational window starts when individuals are aged 15, ending when they are 45 years old or with the time of the interview for right-censored cases. In order to test the gendered pattern of effects of sociodemographic variables and social change, models will be estimated separately by genders and cohorts. I decided to implement a two-cohort comparison in order to distinguish a “fordist” and a “post-fordist” period. The first cohort includes people born between 1938 and 1959 and the second cohort includes people born after 1960. People born before 1938 have not been considered in this chapter⁴¹.

The descriptive results concerning the age at first union, presented in Tab. 5, clarify the rationale for such a distinction⁴²: in 60 years the median age at the transition to the first union decreased of about 2 years, while the median age of the cohort 1960-70 increased of almost 3 years comparing with the previous one. So, it makes sense to evaluate social change by means of a simple two-cohort comparison.

<i>Birth cohorts</i>	Women	Men
1900-1927	24.8	28.8
1928-1937	24.7	28.3
1938-1948	23.8	27.2
1949-1959	23.0	26.7
1960-1970	25.7	29.7
1971+	29.8	32.9

⁴¹ Of course there is an issue when comparing the two cohorts due to the high number of right-censored cases for the post-fordist cohort, which results in a comparison of two groups which are qualitatively different. More precisely, the results for the post-fordist cohort are not conclusive as many individuals are still too young for family transitions in the last observational year. As this problem does not allow for a raw comparison of the coefficients, the interpretation of the results will just focus on changes in the gendered pattern of the effects of sociodemographic variables across cohorts.

⁴² Tab. 5 refers to the first union in order to reduce problems of right-censoring.

Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005).

The variables used to identify the effects of education and employment careers are the following:

- a) a time-varying dummy to identify the exit from the school system;
- b) a time-varying variable for educational attainment, distinguishing four educational levels (elementary, lower-secondary, higher-secondary and tertiary). Secondary and tertiary levels are further distinguished according to the field (see points c) and d))⁴³;
- c) a “humanistic/care-oriented” field of study including most Lycei and teacher training as far as higher-secondary education is concerned; Literature, Psycho-pedagogical and Socio-political studies, Law and Medicine for tertiary education;
- d) a “technical/scientific” field of study including scientific Lyceum, industrial, technical and commercial studies for higher-secondary education; Economics and Statistics, Architecture, Engineering and Natural Sciences for tertiary education;
- e) a time-varying dummy to identify not employment episodes and social class, operationalized according to the Italian version of the EGP class schema (Cobalti and Schizzerotto, 1994), also used to identify the class of origin (as the father’s class when the respondent was 14).

2.2.2 *The fordist period and the male breadwinner model*

Models I in Tab. 6 focus on the effects of education on men’s and women’s transition to the first child, net of the class of origin, area of residence and birth cohort⁴⁴. Controlling for educational enrolment, educational level has strongly non-linear effects on the risk of having a first child among fordist men. For the latter the risk of parenthood is particularly low among those holding a “humanistic/care-oriented” high-school degree while tertiary education in scientific and technical fields speed up the transition, to the point that there are no statistically significant differences between the latter and having left the educational system at elementary schools⁴⁵.

⁴³ Few residuals fields of study are included in a “other” category.

⁴⁴ Among control variables, class of origin has no significant effects once individuals’ educational career is controlled for. The birth cohort 1949-1959 has limited negative effects in all models only among women, while being in the South has positive effects on the transition to the first child only among men.

⁴⁵ Readers should bear in mind that exponentiated coefficients higher than 1 in log-logistic duration models indicate a lower risk of having a first child (see par. 2.1 in this chapter). For instance, the

On the opposite, among women, the transition is postponed especially among those with tertiary education in the “technical/scientific” fields, while the level of education delays the transition to first child monotonically until the high-school level. Then no significant differences have been found between the latter and tertiary level of education. Moreover, also educational enrolment has stronger postponement effects among women compared to men.

Given this pattern, the overall negative effects of educational attainment, and the earning potentials connected with it, are stronger among women, thus confirming the hypotheses and the theoretical expectations presented in Tab. 2.

Shifting to the effects of employment (Models II in Tab. 6), having a job has a very strong positive effect among fordist men which captures the whole effect of educational enrolment as well as part of the postponement effects of “weak” tertiary fields of study. The same gendered pattern of effects of the field of study holds concerning the effect of employment: having a job has a very strong negative effect on the risk of experiencing the first childbirth among fordist women, additional to the effect of being enrolled in the school system and exiting from it with a “strong” university degree.

Social class matters very little as far as the transition to first child of fordist men is concerned. Among fordist women, social class explains large part of the postponement effects of holding a tertiary degree in technical and scientific fields. The latter may capture the earning potentials connected with education, therefore the negative effect on the transition to the first child of women’s career-orientation. Indeed, women in the bourgeoisie are by far the slowest in the transition to the first child. On the opposite, there are almost no differences between not employed women and women employed in the agricultural sector. This is related to the high fertility of rural areas, which may be due both to its traditional life-style and to the integration of work within the family life helping women to reconcile work and family duties.

Finally, it should be noticed that, once models include a dummy for the month of the first stable union, i.e. marriage in virtually all cases, there are no variables affecting directly the transition to the first child among fordist men – apart from the effects of being resident in the South. These results are not shown here because the latter constitute the focus of the next chapter, where the interrelations between family events and the role of preferences and structural constraints will be treated in a more systematic way.

The general pattern for fordist men may be summarized as such: exiting the school system (better if holding a technical/scientific kind of degree) and finding a job, a very “fluid” transition for men in the fordist period, is the strongest predictor of marriage. Then, once men

coefficient 1.47 associated with the dummy indicating an employment episode among women in Tab. 6 means that the survival time increases by a factor of 1.47 if women are employed rather than not employed. In other words, the survival time increases by 47%.

got married, only being resident in the South influences directly the transition to the first child, speeding it up. Among fordist women, no such a strict correlation between exiting from the school system and having a job is found and the latter, especially at the top of the class ranking, is negatively correlated with the transition to first child.

Tab. 6 Education, earning potentials and the time to the first child
(individuals born 1938-1959)

	Men I	Men II	Men III	Women I	Women II	Women III
Not enroled (ref. cat.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enroled Elementary (ref. cat.)	1.33***	1.00	1.00	1.63***	1.93***	1.95***
Lo-Sec	1.07**	1.08**	1.08**	1.18***	1.14***	1.16***
Hi-Sec (h/c)	1.38***	1.37***	1.37***	1.42***	1.35***	1.35***
Hi-Sec (t/s)	1.17***	1.16***	1.17***	1.31***	1.27***	1.27***
Hi-Sec (other)	1.14**	1.13*	1.14*	1.35***	1.26***	1.25***
Tertiary (t/s)	1.13	1.10	1.11	1.57***	1.42**	1.24
Tertiary (h/c)	1.19**	1.13	1.14	1.33**	1.19	1.12
Tertiary (other)	1.25*	1.20	1.20	1.26	1.17	1.21
Not employed (ref. cat.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employed Bourgeoisie (ref. cat.)	-	.68***	-	-	1.47***	-
White collar	-	-	1.03	-	-	.69**
Urban petite bourgeoisie	-	-	.98	-	-	.67**
Agricultural petite bourgeoisie	-	-	.94	-	-	.50***
Urban working class	-	-	1.04	-	-	.73*
Agricultural working class	-	-	1.11	-	-	.53***
Not employed	-	-	1.52***	-	-	.46***

***: $p < 0.01$; **: $p < 0.05$; *: $p < 0.10$. Exponentiated coefficients from Log-logistic duration models (accelerate failure time specification). Models control for class of origin and two dummy variables for the 1949-1959 birth cohort and residence in Southern Italy.

Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005).

2.2.3 The post-fordist period: less work-family incompatibility, less children

Keeping in mind the caveats discussed at the end of the paragraph 2.1 in this chapter, the pattern of results presented in the previous paragraph is consistent with the fordist male-breadwinner society developed after WWII. In tab. 7 results for the post-fordist period are

shown⁴⁶. First of all, Models I shows that there are no differences concerning the gendered pattern of effects of educational enrolment and level between the two cohorts, as even among post-fordist men and women the latter tend to postpone parenthood more than the former the higher the educational level and the longer the permanence in the school system. But it seems that have taken place a sort of “equalization” concerning the effects of the field of study in the post-fordist period. Indeed, for both men and women the transition to first child is mainly postponed for those with tertiary education in the “humanistic/care-oriented field”. However, differences between high-school and tertiary education are somewhat blurred now among both men and women.

	Men I	Men II	Men III	Women I	Women II	Women III
Not enrolled (ref. cat.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enrolled Elementary (ref. cat.)	1.75***	1.34**	1.33**	1.94***	2.07***	2.05***
Lo-Sec	1.27**	1.34***	1.32**	1.49***	1.46***	1.47***
Hi-Sec (h/c)	1.44***	1.49***	1.50***	2.02***	1.97***	2.03***
Hi-Sec (t/s)	1.45***	1.52***	1.52***	2.00***	1.94***	2.06***
Hi-Sec (other)	1.40***	1.45***	1.46***	1.91***	1.87***	1.92***
Tertiary (t/s)	1.41***	1.46***	1.40***	1.79***	1.72***	1.96***
Tertiary (h/c)	1.62***	1.64***	1.60***	2.25***	2.19***	2.36***
Tertiary (other)	1.45***	1.51***	1.49***	1.92***	1.90***	2.08***
Not employed (ref. cat.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employed Bourgeoisie (ref. cat.)	-	.68***	-	-	1.24***	-
White collar Urban petite bourgeoisie	-	-	.88*	-	-	1.11
Agricultural petite bourgeoisie	-	-	.92	-	-	1.11
Urban working class Agricultural working class	-	-	1.10	-	-	1.42
Not employed	-	-	.93	-	-	1.37***
Not employed	-	-	.81	-	-	.85
Not employed	-	-	1.36***	-	-	.94

⁴⁶ Among control variables, the trend toward a postponement of the transition to the first child is confirmed and strongly speeded up for individuals born after 1969, even after controlling for educational and employment careers. In the post-fordist period, the effects of both area of residence and class of origin are stronger than in the fordist one. Among women, the lower the class of origin, the faster the transition to parenthood. Men and women resident in Southern Italy are much quicker in the transition, also after controlling for educational and employment histories.

***: $p < 0.01$; **: $p < 0.05$; *: $p < 0.10$. Exponentiated coefficients from Log-logistic duration models (accelerate failure time specification). Models control for class of origin and two dummy variables for individuals born after 1969 and residence in Southern Italy.

Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005).

Even for people born in the post-fordist period, having a job works differently according to gender (Models II in Tab. 7). But the effects among women, are now weaker and, moreover, the only jobs really causing a postponement of the first child are those in the urban working class. For some women, then, we may observe an income effect on the transition to the first child of increasing earning potentials, similarly to men. This confirms the results concerning the field of study and the idea that in the post-fordist period women are becoming “more similar” to men as far as the mechanisms behind the transition to the first child are concerned.

After controlling for employment, the effect of educational enrolment among men only reduces but it does not disappear. This indicates that there is no more such a strict connection between exiting the school system and finding a stable job in the post-fordist period⁴⁷.

Comparing the fordist and post-fordist periods globally, the strictness of the “traditional” sequences of the life-cycle becomes weaker even among men and, more importantly, work and family seems to be less incompatible for younger women⁴⁸. This can happen as an effect of an increased availability of part-time jobs and public childcare provisions or increased gender equality in the division of domestic work. But, given the limited substantial changes experienced by Italy in these domains, my hypothesis is that the apparent less incompatibility between employment and children is mainly due to economic constraints, i.e. the fact that two incomes constitute more and more a need for a family to plan a childbirth.

It is important to stress that the trade-off between work and family among Italian women is still present, although weakening and pointing to a non-linear relation between economic resources and fertility as it has been found in liberal countries (see par. 1.1.31 in the first chapter): upper class women may be able to cope with time constraints by means of their income, while those women employed in unskilled jobs or with precarious labour market

⁴⁷ The same can be said concerning the link between the first union and the transition to the first child: in the post-fordist period employment has a positive direct effect among men on the risk of experiencing the first child even after controlling for marital status, which now entails a higher, although still very limited, number of cohabitations.

⁴⁸ The conclusion concerning the existence of a trend toward weaker negative effects of women’s employment on their transition to motherhood, at least in the selected cohorts, seems to be not influenced by the selection of only two points in time. I tried to run a pooled model with interaction terms between women employment condition and birth cohorts (1938-1948, 1949-1959, 1960-1970, 1971+), and the effects were strongly negative in 1938-48 and monotonically less negative across the following cohorts, being marginally significant in the 1960-1970 cohort and not significant in the cohort of women born after 1971.

attachment are in the worst position as they lack both time and money (Modena and Sabatini, 2012).

However, a market-driven de-familialization is more difficult for Italian women given the deficiencies and the costs of private childcare services. Therefore, also the reduced burden of domestic work due to the limited family size may matter to explain the weakening of the work-family trade-off. As more and more women “decide” to have only one child, there may be no need for them to choose between employment and motherhood at the moment of the first child. Indeed, post-fordist women with only one child could be even more likely not to leave the labour market around childbirths, or to re-enter after a temporary withdrawal. The analysis of female labour market participation around childbirth(s) can give additional hints to confirm these hypotheses.

2.3 Female Labour Market Participation Around Childbirth(s) in Italy: the Role of the Educational Expansion and its Fertility Consequences

2.3.1 Childbirths and female labour market participation in Italy across cohorts

As in Tab. 1 in the first chapter, empirical analyses concerning the “family>work” path start with a description of the pattern of female labour market participation around the first childbirth. Results based on ILFI data confirm the general finding that in countries with very low female labour market participation the latter is somewhat independent from childbirth(s): women either work before and after or “decide” not to work at all, as discussed in the review of the literature (see Tab. 1). As shown in Fig. 8⁴⁹, the employment rate of women who have had at least one child and aged 15-45 declines barely by 10 percentage points during the 2 years before childbirth. Then, almost nothing changes in the next 10 years.

As it can be seen in Fig. 9, nor the levels of exiting neither the pace of re-entering into the labour market around first childbirth seem to be influenced by the cohort women belong to, although a substantial increase in the absolute rate of female labour market participation is found⁵⁰. There were no expectations of cohort effects in this respect, for no dramatic changes have taken place in Italy in the last decades concerning the reconciliation of women’s duties in both “work” and “family” domains.

⁴⁹ In the graph and in all subsequent analyses, maternity leaves have been considered as employment spells.

⁵⁰ Of course only few women in the last cohort are observed in all the points of the observational window.

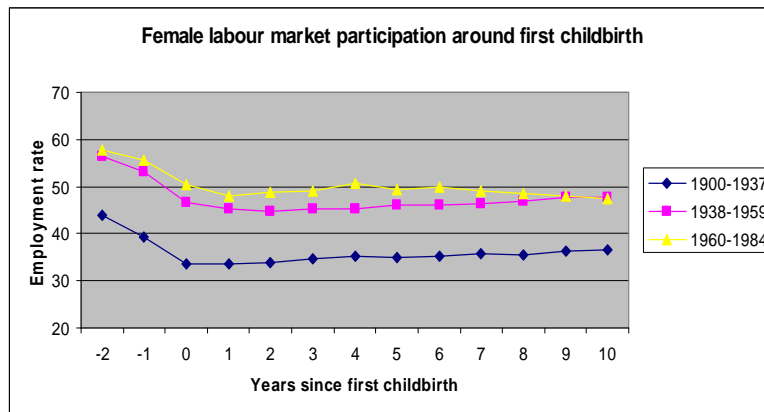
Fig. 8 Female labour market participation 2 years before and 10 years after the first childbirth



Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005).

A similar exercise applied to countries like Germany, the Netherlands and U.K. showed very different results pointing toward increasing rates of re-entering into the labour market as an effect of institutional and cultural changes, as argued by Fouarge et al. (2010).

Fig. 9 Female labour market participation 2 years before and 10 years after the first childbirth according to the birth cohort

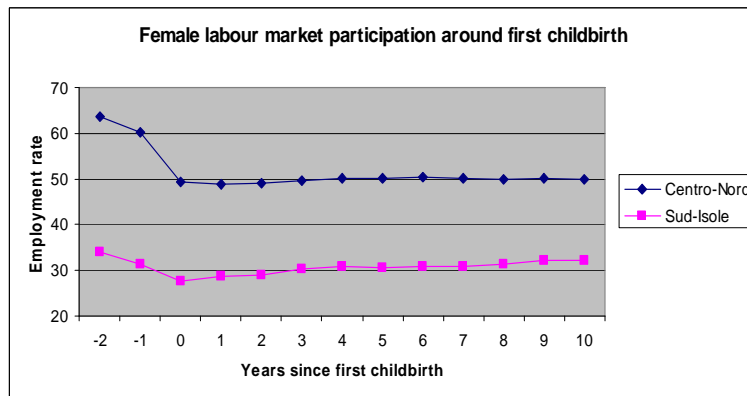


Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005).

On the contrary, both levels and patterns of female labour market participation are highly influenced by women’s area of residence. As it can be seen in Fig. 10, Southerner women not only have much higher probability to be out of the labour force in all points in time, but also experience a sort of U-shaped trend of the employment rate around childbirth: in the long run, almost all women who withdrew from the labour market eventually come back in it.

That may be explained by the fact that working women in Southern Italy constitute a highly selected group strongly attached to the labour market⁵¹.

Fig. 10 Female labour market participation 2 years before and 10 years after the first childbirth according to the area of residence



Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005).

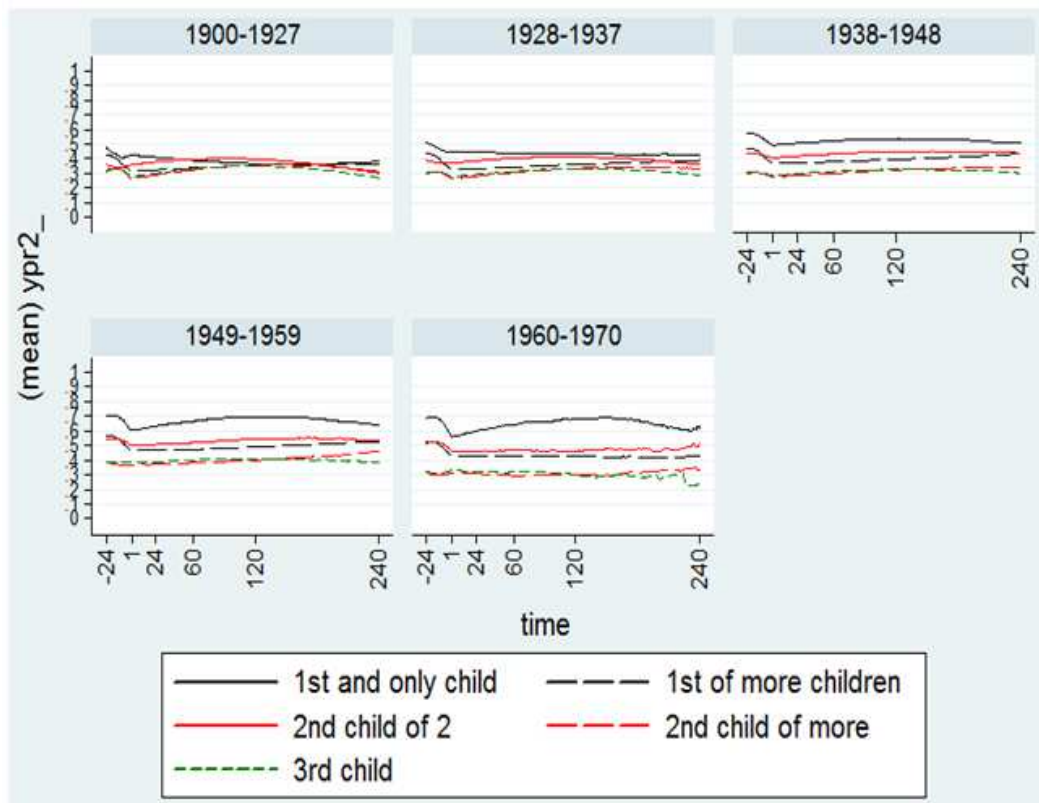
At the end of the previous paragraph it has been shown how employment and the transition to motherhood have become less incompatible for women belonging to younger cohorts. Moreover, the last descriptive evidence suggests that only the first child may influence women’s participation decisions, while the effects of higher-order childbirths on labour market withdrawals may be negligible. As female labour market participation increased and the trade-off between work and first motherhood has weakened without major changes in family policies or husbands’ support to domestic chores, this could imply that women with only one child are the only who managed to participate more across cohorts. Moreover, as the first child seems to be the crucial moment for women to decide whether to exit and/or to re-enter the labour market, women with only one child could have become also more likely to re-enter.

To answer these questions, results concerning women’s monthly probability of being employed 2 years before and 20 years around first and higher-order childbirths will be presented. The strategy will allow to test the effects of higher-order childbirths across cohorts and therefore to confirm the hypothesis concerning the crucial role of the first childbirth. Following the work by Fouarge et al. (2010), the ILFI data have been rearranged into a mother–birth dataset for each of the childbirth sequences (1st child and only, 1st of more, 2nd of 2, 2nd of

⁵¹ One might wonder why such a group of women is virtually absent in the North, as the employment rate is absolutely flat after the first childbirth in Northern regions. It may be argued that part of Southern working women are “pushed” in the labour market under the pressure of strong economic constraints. But the high share of public employment might play a role here as well (Reyneri, 2008), especially considering the results of Tab. 9.

more and 3rd)⁵². Then, probit models on the pooled data have been estimated to predict mothers-to-be monthly labour market participation starting from 24 months before child to 240 months after (dependent variable employed/not employed). In the model, time before and after each childbirth is included as covariate, to model the anticipation effects and labour market re-entry, with squared effects in order to grasp the non-linear patterns observed in Fig. 8⁵³. Time before and after each childbirth is interacted with birth cohorts and the birth sequence. Although Fig. 9 did not show any pattern of cohort change, it is possible that some change did occur among women with only one child, as predicted probabilities presented in Fig. 11 suggest.

Fig. 11 Female labour market participation 2 years before and 20 years after childbirth according to the birth cohort and the birth sequence



Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005).

⁵² This means that one mother is included in the dataset once for every child. This strategy to stack mothers' employment histories according to the birth sequence allows to impose constraints on the effects of the additional independent variables that will be included in the model. The latter is run with the "cluster" option in order to take into account repeated observations within each mother (see Tab. 8).

⁵³ As mentioned in the methodological paragraph 2.1, the longitudinal structure of the data is taken into account by including a spline for time in the model, i.e. a polynomial function of time that is piece-wise defined. The model includes indeed a linear and a quadratic term for the time prior to each birth and for the time after each birth, so that both the non-linearities of the anticipation (exit) and the re-entry effects are modeled. That is how the pattern of predicted probabilities shown in Figs. 11-13, with a very strong dip around childbirths, has been obtained by means of simple quadratic functions.

As hypothesized, female labour market participation for women with more than two children is almost completely independent from childbirths, especially higher-order ones. It is confirmed that mainly the first and, to a limited extent, the second childbirth matter for women's participation decisions, especially among younger cohorts. The dotted red and green lines are not only flat but also stable, so that even levels of participation did not change much across cohorts for women with more than two children.

Women with only two children tend to exit at the first rather than at the second childbirth, even if in the last two cohorts a decrease in participation rates respectively of 8 and 5 percentage points within two years prior to each childbirth has been detected. But only younger women with only one child manage to experience a V-shaped pattern typical, for example, of Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands: in the last birth cohort, participation rate of women with only one child drops approximately from 70 to 57%, but after ten years it comes back to the same rate than two years before the childbirth. Moreover, while women with two children at most experienced a very limited average increase in the level of labour market participation comparing the first and the last cohort, the average increase has been higher than 20 percentage points among women with only one child⁵⁴. Increased female labour market participation in Italy occurred then at the expense of fertility rates.

Tab. 8 shows the effects of additional independent variables such as area of residence, level of education, marital status, age at first birth and a non-selection hazard to become a mother drawn by a selection tobit modelling the probability to become a mother on the whole sample of women⁵⁵. The interesting finding here is that the selected variables seem to play a marginal role in explaining Italian women's participation decisions, as shown by the model fit. More precisely, birth cohort and partly also the birth sequence have almost no effects on women's labour market participation, while the only variable with strong effects, thus explaining almost completely the increase in female labour market participation observed in Fig. 11, is women's educational attainment.

⁵⁴ It should be noticed how, comparing the 1960-70 and 1949-59 birth cohorts, the distance in participation rates between women with only one child and all other women increased also because the latter are more likely to be out of the labour market in 1960-70 comparing with the previous birth cohort. That is likely due to the fact that women with more than one child in the youngest cohort are highly selected in terms of family orientation.

⁵⁵ Mothers could have different labour market attachment than non-mothers (about 10-15% of women are observed not experiencing the first childbirth depending on the birth cohort). To correct for this possible source of bias, the residuals of a tobit regression modeling the probability to become a mother as a function of women's level of education and marital status, both interacted with birth cohort have been included in the model (following Fouarge et al., 2010). Tab. 8 shows how the coefficient for the tobit residuals is little in size and only marginally significant, although with a negative sign as expected.

Tab. 8 Determinants of Italian women labour market participation around first childbirth

1900-1927 (ref.)	-
1928-1937	.00
1938-1948	-.01
1949-1959	.12
1960-1970	.00
Age at first birth	.00
South	-.37***
Elementary (ref.)	-
Low-Secondary	.12**
High-Secondary	.57***
Tertiary	1.17***
Single (ref.)	-
Married	-.25**
Separated/Divorced	.48***
1 st child of 1 (ref.)	-
1 st child of more	-.11
2 nd child of 2	-.10
2 nd child of more	-.18**
3 rd or more children	-.15*
Selection into motherhood	-.05*
N=3643, Pseudo-R2=.079	

***: $p < 0.01$; **: $p < 0.05$; *: $p < 0.10$. Robust standard errors for clustering in id. Coefficients from probit models controlling for time before and after childbirth (linear and quadratic) and interactions with birth sequence and birth cohorts. Coefficients for birth cohorts and birth sequence are main effects.

Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005).

The effects of educational attainment seem stronger in Italy than in the other countries analysed by Fouarge et al. (2010), where birth cohort was found to have a huge impact on participation net of all other variables, especially in the Netherlands. As the authors interpret the cohort effect as the impact of changes in preferences and/or institutional settings fostering women's reconciliation, it is clear how in the Italian case the increase of female participation has been driven almost totally by women's higher educational attainment (Scherer and Reyneri, 2008). The only significant impact of birth cohorts can be found in the V-shaped pattern of participation of women with only one child. As recognized by Scherer and Reyneri (*ibidem*),

while “structural” factors – i.e. education – constitute the main force behind the increase in female labour market participation in Italy, a cohort-specific – “cultural” – effect is only observable in the increasing discontinuity of women’s work careers, which tend to leave and to re-enter more frequently into the labour market⁵⁶. As the authors suggested, the finding may represent the preference of younger cohorts to combine work and family, also because when participation rates reach 70%, also “adaptive” women enter the labour market and not just “career-oriented” ones, to cite Hakim’s typology (2006, 2000).

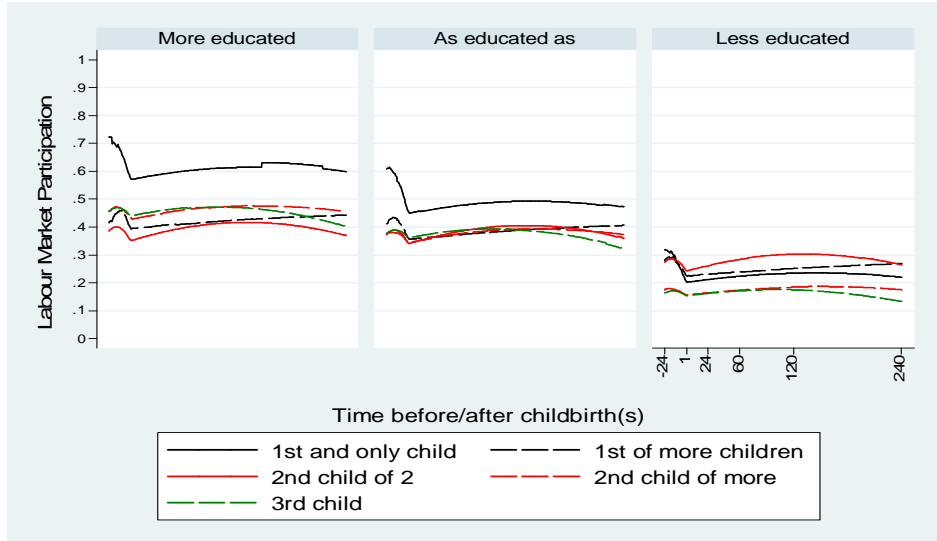
If the huge impact of women’s education confirms the hypotheses of Tab. 3, it is still to be evaluated the role of husbands’ resources. The hypothesis is that, in the Mediterranean setting, husbands’ resources tend to discourage women’s participation decisions, as Tab. 8 already suggests given that marriage is found to have a negative effect while the very few episodes of marital break-ups have positive ones, much in line with Becker’s specialization thesis. Therefore, previous models have been augmented with husbands’ educational attainment⁵⁷, interacted with the birth sequence and separately for two cohorts (women born until and after 1949), for reason of limited sample size. In Figg. 12 and 13 the effects of husbands’ educational attainment, relative to that of women, for both cohorts are presented. In order to figure out the effects of partners’ educational differentials, women’s predicted probabilities of being monthly employed have been estimated given a certain level of women’s education, low-secondary for older women and high-secondary for the younger ones, and depending on men’s educational level.

The results in Fig. 12 show lower wives’ participation rates when they are less educated than husbands, while no substantial changes are observable between women more and as educated as their husbands. This asymmetry is at odds with the relative resources hypothesis, even because husbands’ social class has no significant effects, and suggests an important role of attitudes toward the gender roles (Van Berkel and de Graaf, 1999). The latter interpretation is confirmed by means of the interaction with the birth sequence: I find that women with only one child who are more educated than their husbands are strongly advantaged in their labour market attachment: for this very selected group, the level of labour market participation reaches that of women born in the cohort 1960-1970 in Fig. 11, although they do not re-enter into the labour market with the same pace.

⁵⁶ While the pattern of results confirms the findings of Scherer and Reyneri (2008), it should be underlined that women’s decisions to invest more in education and reduce fertility may not be considered as merely “structural” factors, at least without controlling for women’s preferences.

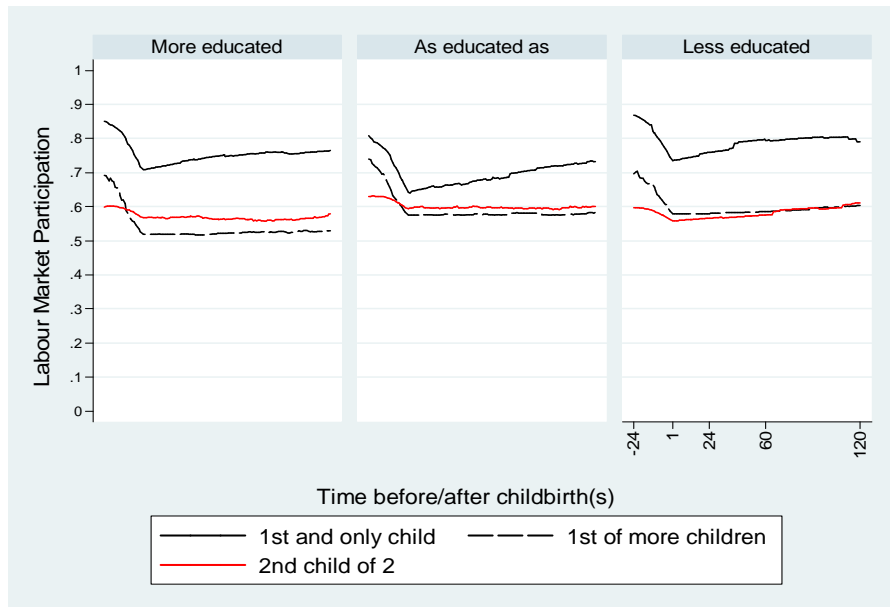
⁵⁷ I found husbands’ social class to have no significant effects on female labour market participation, consistently with the results obtained by Lucchini et al. (2007).

Fig. 12 Labour market participation around childbirth(s) of women born between 1900-1948, according to husbands' educational level (only women with lower-secondary education)



Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005).

Fig. 13 Labour market participation around childbirth(s) of women born between 1949-1970, according to husbands' educational level (only women with higher-secondary education)



Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005).

On the opposite, results shown in Fig. 13 show no effects of husbands' comparative advantage among younger women⁵⁸. The reader can also notice the high participation rate for Italian women with higher-secondary education and only one child born after 1948, the same observed nowadays in a country like the Netherlands.

By now it has been shown how Italian women do not schedule much their labour market participation according to childbearing decisions and, if they do so, the crucial moment is that of the first childbirth. In the last section of this chapter the characteristics of those women who "choose" housewifery around the first childbirth will be analysed.

2.3.2 *Mechanisms behind women's transitions to housewifery around first childbirth in Italy*

Women born until 1970 and aged 15-45 who have had at least one child and were in the labour market 24 months before the first childbirth have been selected. These women are then followed from 24 months before the childbirth until the subsequent 120 months and Piece-Wise Constant Exponential Models (P-WCEMs) are estimated to study the transition rate toward home-making depending on women's economic and cultural resources, labour market attachment and career, controlling for ascriptive and family-related variables⁵⁹. The full model will constitute a benchmark to analyse the effects of partners' educational and economic resources.

These are the ascriptive variables controlled for⁶⁰:

- a) age (time-varying);
- b) birth cohort (time-constant);
- c) area of residence at the childbirth (time-constant);
- d) class of origin (time-constant);
- e) whether women's mother ever worked (time constant).

Substantial changes depending on women's birth cohort are not expected, based on the results and considerations of the previous paragraph. However, even higher withdrawals rate for younger cohorts should be observed, as a result of the increasing careers' discontinuity found in the previous paragraph. As women in the South tend to come back into labour market after

⁵⁸ For the younger cohort, predictions have been limited to 120 months after the childbirth, given the high percentage of censored observations, and only women with no more than two children have been considered because third childbirths are very rare in the last cohorts.

⁵⁹ Few episodes of retirement and unemployment are not considered as failures.

⁶⁰ Only relevant and statistically significant variables are left in the models, at each step of the analysis.

exiting for the first child, as shown in Fig. 10, negative effects of being in the South on labour market withdrawals after first childbirth should be found.

The effects of women's cultural and economic resources, the kind of labour market attachment and career are considered both at the beginning of the observational window and as time-varying covariates. Crucial variables, with respect to micro-mechanisms discussed in Tab. 3, controlled for in the models are the following:

- a) Educational level and field of study at $t=-24$ (time-constant)⁶¹;
- b) Occupational score at $t=-24$ (time-constant)⁶².

In order to check for upward and downward mobility episodes and the type of occupation, these variables have been added to the model:

- c) type of contract at $t=-24$ (time-constant)
- d) working in the public sector at $t=-24$ (time-constant);
- e) working in the agricultural sector at $t=-24$ (time-constant);
- f) holding voluntary or involuntary part-time jobs (time-varying);
- g) episodes of downward and upward mobility (time-varying)⁶³;

The rationale behind this model specification is that, as most of the labour market withdrawals occur around the first childbirth, it is more useful to consider women's characteristics just prior to this crucial moment: what really matters is the kind and strength of labour market attachment of the mothers-to-be once they decided to start their fertility careers. Some very specific kind of changes in women's characteristics could be relevant in order to predict subsequent withdrawals: whether they experience social mobility episodes or they decide to shift to part-time employment.

The main theoretical expectations, according to the hypotheses presented at the beginning of this chapter, are that measures fostering the conciliation of work and family duties – and in absence of public childcare provisions and good quality part-time as far as Italy is concerned, even employment in the public sector or agricultural field could work as functional equivalents – and the opportunity-costs coming from high investments in human capital and

⁶¹ The variable is the same used for the models concerning the transition to parenthood. Very few women still enrolled in the educational system have been eliminated from the analysis.

⁶² I used the De Lillo-Schizzerotto (reputational) social standing scale (De Lillo and Schizzerotto, 1985).

⁶³ I considered upward/downward mobility increases/decreases of the occupational score with respect to the previous employment episode in the observational window.

high earning potentials are both important predictors of women's labour market withdrawals around first childbirth in Italy.

Finally, family-related variables have been included:

- a) being married (time-varying);
- b) the total number of children women will have in their life (time-constant);
- c) number of childbirths in the observational window (time-varying, first childbirth included).

As only about 65% of women are married 2 years before the first childbirth (while 95% are married at the childbirth), this control allows to check if part of the labour market withdrawals is due to marriage itself. The reason to check for the total number of children as a time-constant (anticipated) variable as well as additional childbirths as a time-varying variable will be more clear when the results will be discussed.

These are the coefficients of the P-WCEMs⁶⁴:

Tab. 9 Determinants of women's transitions to housewifery around first childbirth in Italy

	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V	Model VI	Model VII	Model VIII
<i>Ascriptive variables</i>								
Age	-.08***	-.04***	-.04***	-.04***	-.03***	-.03***	.00	.00
Centre-North (ref. cat.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South at cb	-.12	-.08	.04	.04	-.18*	-.17	-.56***	-.54***
1900-1927 (ref. cat.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1928-1937	.16	.28*	.13	.13	.19	-.35	-1.28*	-1.22
1938-1948	.21	.46***	.25*	.24	.36**	-.14	-.29	-1.28
1949-1959	-.03	.35**	.10	.08	.26*	-.10	-.00	-.04
1960-1970	-.10	.52***	.28*	.29*	.51***	-.10	.19	.20
Mother ever Worked	-.51***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MW*28-37	.39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MW*38-48	.31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MW*49-59	.35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MW*60-70	.77***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Education</i>	<i>and</i>							

⁶⁴ Time-dummies plus a constant term for the baseline hazard not shown.

occupation								
Elementary (cat. ref.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lo-Secondary	-	-.15	-.16	-.15	-.10	-.10	-.22	-.22
Hi-Sec (hum/care)	-	-1.34***	-1.30***	-1.28***	-1.29***	-1.29***	-1.28***	-1.30***
Hi-Sec (tech/scien)	-	-.18	-.11	-.09	-.10	-.11	-.62**	-.64**
Hi-Sec (other)	-	.00	.05	.05	.08	.07	-.02	-.04
Univ. (tech/scien)	-	-2.15**	-2.02**	-2.01**	-1.96*	-2.05**	-1.75*	-1.78*
Univ. (hum/care)	-	-1.52***	-1.43***	-1.40***	-1.40***	-1.40***	-1.51**	-1.53**
Univ. (other)	-	-.97*	-.87*	-.85	-.82	-.87*	-1.13	-1.16*
Occupation Score -24	-	-.01***	-.01***	-.01***	-.01***	-.03***	-.06***	-.06**
Occ.Score*28-37	-	-	-	-	-	.02*	.07**	.07**
Occ.Score*38-48	-	-	-	-	-	.02*	.05*	.05*
Occ.Score*49-59	-	-	-	-	-	.01	.04*	.04
Occ.Score*60-70	-	-	-	-	-	.02**	.05**	.05**
Kind of Job and Career								
Typical -24 (ref. cat.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Atypical -24	-	-	-.04	-.01	-.04	-.03	-.19	-.21
Black -24	-	-	.47***	.53***	.49***	.47***	-.18	-.18
Seasonal -24	-	-	.39**	.42**	.43**	.44**	.09	.09
Private -24 (ref. cat.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public -24	-	-	-.61*	-.61*	-.65*	-.64*	-1.08*	-1.10*
Nonagricultural -24 (ref. cat.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agricultural -24	-	-	-.27***	-.27***	-.29***	-.31***	-.40***	-.40***
Full-time (ref. cat.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time (vol.)	-	-	-	-.33*	-.37*	-.35*	-.27	-.28
Part-time (invol.)	-	-	-	-.19	-.16	-.15	-.12	-.10
Same occupational score (ref. cat.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Upward Mobility	-	-	-	-.25	-.27	-.30*	-.24	-.23
Downward Mobility	-	-	-	-.08	-.05	-.05	-.02	-.01
Family events								
Never married (ref. cat.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Been married	-	-	-	-	-.04	-	-	-
Total N Kids	-	-	-	-	.37***	.38***	.44***	.49***
N childbirths	-	-	-	-	-.27**	-.28**	-.01	.48*
Total N kids*Nchildbirths	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.26**
<i>L-likelihood</i>	-1900.00	-1868.27	-1837.08	-1834.21	-1804.91	-1802.53		

***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.10. Time-dummies plus a constant term for the baseline hazard not shown.	N=1359, Failures=250 Obs=132279
N=1765, Failures=651, Observations=172100. L-likelihood (baseline only): 1969.25	

Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005).

Ascriptive variables have a very little influence on women's transition to homemaking, apart from age: the exiting risk declines in a linear fashion as age increases⁶⁵. This confirms the general picture about Italian women's labour market participation that, once passed the most crucial moment of the first childbirth, if a woman has succeeded in remaining in the labour market, then labour market attachment increases following potential improvement in the career. That is why adding information about social stratification in Model II the age coefficient decreases by 50%. It is confirmed as well that being in the South is connected with lower risk of exiting the labour market after the childbirth, as it can be seen in Model VII, where only women who remained in the labour market at the month of the first childbirth are included. Also having had a working mother, as a proxy of attitudes toward paid work, has negative effects on exiting, although the effect disappear for the youngest cohort. Concerning cohort effects, once models control for the number of children women will have at the end of their fertility career (Model V), the youngest generation of women seems to be more likely to leave the labour market. If the latter experience the same rate of exiting comparing with older cohorts is because they reduced the number of children they decided to have. This result, apart from confirming the idea that increased levels of female labour market participation in Italy are mainly due to compositional effects connected with higher educational levels and reduced fertility, also confirms the finding that women's employment careers are becoming more discontinuous (Fig. 11; Scherer and Reyneri, 2008).

The most important predictors of labour market withdrawals are women's resources and earning potentials, especially holding a high-school degree in the humanistic field or tertiary education in the technical/scientific field. The first is mainly connected with working in the school system, the second with higher opportunity-costs of career interruptions, representing therefore the two explanatory mechanisms connected, on the one hand, with an easier work-life balance and, on the other hand, human capital investments. Moreover, the higher the occupational score, the lower the probability of leaving the labour market. The effects of the occupational score decrease significantly for the youngest cohort (Model VI), following the

⁶⁵ Other functional forms were not significantly better than the linear one.

general argument that when female labour market participation increases, its social structuration decreases (see first chapter).

Some job characteristics are also important, for women who worked in the informal economy or in seasonal jobs have much higher transition rates. On the opposite, women working in the public sector, which only includes here Public Administration (PA), have lower risks of leaving the labour market⁶⁶. Working in the PA has even stronger effects if the focus is on withdrawals occurring after the first childbirth, since Model VII suggests that being in the public sector is as strong a predictor as level of education. Even the negative effects of working in the agricultural sector, where the distinction itself between “home” and “work” is somewhat blurred, are found to be stronger. It has been argued how both the opportunity-costs of higher investments in human capital and jobs easing the conciliation of work and family are theoretically relevant to explain female labour market participation around childbirths in Italy, but the latter seem to be more and more relevant with the proceeding of the family-cycle⁶⁷.

Additional childbirths in the observational window are negatively correlated with labour market withdrawals, while the total number of children as a time-constant variable has a strong positive effect. This can be interpreted arguing that women adjust their labour market careers, according to fertility intentions, at the time of the first child. So, if they plan to have several pregnancies, the likelihood to leave the labour market at the first childbirth strongly increases. The effect of the total number of children may be a proxy of women’s family preferences. But, again, if women who decided to work managed to stay into the labour market after the crucial moment of the first pregnancy, their labour market attachment is not affected by additional childbirths (similar results were obtained by Lucchini et al., 2007; Solera, 2006). The negative effects of additional childbirths are not significant once we focus on failures occurring after the first childbirth, among those women who remained into the labour market at the month of first childbirth (Model VII). Is it possible that the absence of effects is due to a positive effect on exits for women with only one child and negative effects for additional childbirths. In order to test this hypothesis, in Model VIII an interaction term with the total number of children is added. Results show that those women who have had only one child in their life are more likely to leave the labour market. This captures the effect of the presence of a small child in the family in absence of public childcare for children aged less than three. The

⁶⁶ Experiences of upward mobility is an additional factor negatively influencing labour market withdrawals, but only weakly.

⁶⁷ The effect of part-time is not strongly significant, but it is well known how under-developed is such a measure of work and family reconciliation in Mediterranean countries (both quantitatively and qualitatively speaking, see Reyneri, 2008). In the selected dataset, only 6% of monthly spells entails voluntary part-time employment episodes.

interaction term is negative and significant, so that it is confirmed how additional childbirths have negative effects on labour market withdrawals.

Finally, as far as at the effects of partners' educational differentials, results shown in Fig. 12 are confirmed, for husbands' (educational) resources negatively affect their wives' labour market participation. As Tab. 10 shows, if husbands are more educated than wives, the risk of exiting the labour market around first childbirth strongly increases⁶⁸, while the opposite does not hold.

Wife as educated as husband (ref. cat.)	-
Wife more educated than husband	-.07
Wife less educated than husband	.43***
Single	.21
Separated/Divorced/ Widow	.49

***: $p < 0.01$; **: $p < 0.05$; *: $p < 0.10$.
Controls for all variables included in Tab. 7 (Model V) not shown.

Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005).

Some Concluding Remarks: What We Can Learn From a “Structural” Perspective About the Italian Pattern of Low Fertility and Low Female Labour Market Participation?

In this chapter the theoretical framework to analyze the relations between female labour market participation and fertility based on a macro-comparative approach linking institutional settings and meso-/micro- explanatory mechanisms has been applied to the Italian case.

As it has been shown, the gendered pattern of effects of education and employment on the transition to the first child as well as the pattern and mechanisms underlying female labour market participation around childbirths depict Italy as a typical example of male-breadwinner society with a sharp trade-off between fertility and female labour market participation. This pattern seems to be persistent across cohorts, although some important changes have to be underlined. More precisely, in the post-war male-breadwinner society, the best family setting

⁶⁸ Model V in Tab. 7 is used as a benchmark to estimate the effects of husbands' resources. Husbands' comparative advantage measured considering social class was found to be not significant. Given the limited number of cases, given that only working women with available partners' information have been selected, results separated by birth cohorts are not presented, but it has been already shown how husbands' effects are virtually nil for women born after 1948 (see Solera, 2006 for a comparison).

for fertility was the one composed by a full-time homemaker wife and a full-time working husband. Earning potentials and educational resources were orthogonal in predicting the transition to parenthood across genders. This pattern slightly changed in the post-fordist period, in the direction of an equalization of the effects of education and earning potentials. Globally speaking, changes indicate that the trend toward a new family equilibrium based on dual-earner families able to conciliate labour market participation and children, which fully developed in Scandinavian countries, is in its embryonic stages in Italy too.

However, while in Socialdemocratic countries the new equilibrium is supported by the institutional setting easing the reconciliation of work and family, in Italy it may have been pushed by the increasing financial needs to become parents and to the decision of reducing family size. For instance, recent studies show how the born of a child is connected to increasing risk of entry into poverty among single-earner Italian families (Barbieri and Bozzon, forthcoming).

Analysis of female labour market participation around childbirths confirmed this hypothesis. Across cohorts, female labour market participation increased mainly among women with only one child and almost completely as a compositional effect due to increasing educational attainment. No other cohort effects have been found, and childbirths themselves are not that much relevant for Italian women labour market participation. Indeed, women in Italy either work before and after childbirths or “decide” not to work at all. The ones who really schedule to leave the labour market according to childbirths, they do it after the first child, also taking into account the total number of children they plan to have. Those women who succeed in remaining in the labour market are both the “strongest” (in terms of education, occupational prestige and employment relation) and the ones less burdened by the work-family demands (working in the public or agricultural sectors and with voluntary part-time arrangements). It is interesting to notice how these two profiles are not at all overlapping. Following Hakim’s typology (2000), the first profile represents the 20% of “career-oriented” women and the second one the 60% of “adaptive” women that, given the absence of part-time employment as well as universal public childcare provisions, in Italy face huge obstacles in their labour market careers (Del Boca et al., 2009; Del Boca and Sauer, 2009).

These results also suggest some theoretical and social policy indications. Most of the literature underlines the importance of public childcare and women’s employment in the public sector, that are the main features of the Socialdemocratic welfare regime. While the latter are certainly important, especially because the months immediately before and after pregnancy are the strongest predictors of women’s labour market withdrawals, it is argued that if the Italian

pattern is characterized by women working either before and after childbirths or never entering the labour market, the effects would be focused on a quite limited population.

Apart from this consideration, the discussion presented in the last paragraph of the theoretical chapter suggests to find alternative solutions. As a matter of fact, the “Scandinavian solution” brought to high level of gendered horizontal segregation in the labour market and higher gender wage-gaps (Mandel and Semyonov, 2005; Gornick and Jacobs, 1998). Moreover, it might be argued that the high costs of implementing a universal public childcare system make this solution not sustainable in a country like Italy, given the very limited capability of public spending. It suggested here that increasing the availability of good-quality and gender-equal part-time jobs could be a good starting measure to assure higher employment equality as well as increasing economic wealth. Following suggestions by Alesina and Ichino (2009), increasing employment equality is also meant as a boost for higher gender equality in the domestic work, the latter being correlated with higher female labour market participation and fertility (Cooke, 2008). These issues concerning the efficacy and efficiency of alternative welfare mixes will be discussed in more detail in the last chapter when comparing Italy and the Netherlands.

As far as the main research question of this thesis, the strong trade-off between work and family still existing in Italy is an important cause of the pattern of low fertility and low female labour market participation. Although women participate more to the labour market and the latter has become more independent from men’s resources, these changes occurred at the expense of fertility, given the lack of family policies for working women.

However, as mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, some other issues factors contribute to understand the Mediterranean and especially the Italian pattern of low fertility and female labour market participation. This idea is reinforced if one looks at the predictive power of those models which are meant to justify empirically the mentioned policy suggestions. As we see in Tab. 8 and 9 where women’s participation decisions are analysed, the share of reduction of the likelihood function (i.e., the pseudo-R²) is quite limited after controlling for crucial variables such as the timing and the number of children (Tab. 8) and many occupational characteristics (Tab. 9). So, if models do suggest that increasing the availability of public childcare and part-time employment may be very helpful to help the reconciliation of work and family duties, one should be cautious about the expected results. The crucial question to be addressed is therefore the following: if childbirths only have limited effects on women’s participation, as the decision whether to participate or not in the labour market is taken before, what else persistently keep Italian women out of the labour market? In other countries, net of education and family behaviours, huge positive cohort effects have been found on women’s probability to be employed. The latter can not be attributed completely to changes in the

institutional settings, as these cross-country differences in cohort effects are much larger than the changes in the direction of an easier reconciliation of work and family duties. And even where the latter occurred, as in the case of the Netherlands with the diffusion of part-time employment and a market-driven diffusion of childcare, it has been argued that norms concerning women's role, especially the approval of working women with children, changed dramatically before the conditions of part-time employment have changed (Visser, 2002), as a consequence of the declining influence of the Christian parties and rising secularization (Houtman and Mascini, 2002) and the diffusion of a liberal culture (Knijn and Saraceno, 2010). For instance, Fouarge et al. (2010), find huge cohort effects on Dutch women participation into the labour market, net of educational attainment and family events, and the authors stress the potential role of stronger preferences for combining work and care. This is partly observable in the Italian case as well, as we have seen, but it concerned only highly educated women with only one child who are able to leave the labour market and re-enter after the childbirth.

Then, it is argued that at least part of the delay in the integration of Italian women participation into the labour market may be due to the persistently traditional attitudes toward the gender roles, which is also reflected by the one of the most unequal gendered division of housework in Europe: according to the OECD, Italian women perform 3 hours and 40 minutes of daily housework more than their male counterparts, while the OECD average gap is 2 hours and 23 minutes, dropping to about 1 hour in Denmark (2011). As recent empirical findings for Italy showed that when parents share housework the probability to have a second or a third child increases, gender inequality in the household may also be a cause of the low fertility (Mencarini, 2007). As far as fertility is concerned, the findings presented here leave room for additional explanatory factors to understand Italian declining fertility rates, at least until the first half of the '90s. For instance, one might argue why fertility has declined that much in a period, between the end of the '60s and the end of the '80s, in which the traditional gender system remained largely untouched and female labour market participation so low.

The next chapters are devoted to an empirical analysis of other, non-structural, factors related to family behaviours, which may be useful to understand the Italian pattern. The impact of the cultural dimension will be analysed by means of both direct operationalizations of values and preferences as well as indirect proxy. The latter strategy will be used in the following chapter, which exploits the cultural differences among Northern and Southern Italian regions. Indeed, the same ILFI data, which completely lack of direct value measures, will be used to disentangle the cultural and structural origins of North/South differences in reproductive behaviours.

Chapter 3: Between preferences and constraints: geographical mobility and reproductive choices of Italian men⁶⁹

Summary

In addition to women's increased educational attainment and different institutional settings, as shown in the previous chapter, also changed orientations toward family to achieve full life-satisfaction have been underlined to explain low fertility rates. Since Southern and Northern Italy differ for the institutional and economic setting, cultural orientations regarding the importance of family as well as fertility rates, also for Italy it seems reasonable to suppose that the latter are caused by both "structural" and "cultural" factors.

It is argued that South-to-North migrations could be an interpretative key of geographical differences in the timing and number of childbirths. In fact, migrants are socialized to different familiar behaviours, although they share with Northerners the same institutional and economic setting. First, results from IARD data (2004) are shown confirming how Southern Italian young people hold negative attitudes toward cohabitation, traditional gender attitudes and higher fertility intentions compared with their Northern counterparts and these differences can be explained, to some extent, by their own and parental levels of religiosity.

ILFI data are then used applying event history models to Italian men's transition to parenthood. Results show that Southern migrants, even the 1.5 generation, are much faster than Northerners as far as the transition to marriage is concerned. Once controlling for marital status, North-South differences in the transition to the first child are largely explained by different levels and patterns of female labour market participation, while preferences could have a crucial impact in the transition to the second child, where migrants and Southerners are equally much faster than Northerners. These results contribute to both the literature about the determinants of fertility and the long-term consequences of migrations. More precisely, results show that if there is empirical evidence of decline in traditional values, such as religiosity and traditional attitudes toward the gender roles, the latter may be an additional explanation for the declining fertility rates. Moreover, the analyses contribute to the literature on the effects of migrations on individuals' life-cycles, supporting an integrated theory combining the main alternative mechanisms suggested in the literature.

The chapter concludes noticing how results are more ambiguous when it comes to understanding the recent Southern pattern of low fertility as well as female labour market participation, similarly to the international comparison between Italy and Northern European countries. Indeed, in recent years Southern Italian regions showed lower fertility rates than their Northern counterparts. While that is certainly connected to the better economic environment and rising family policies in Northern regions, especially public childcare for children aged 0-2, it is argued that at least part of the difference is consistent with the persistence of traditional values in Southern regions. As mentioned in the first chapter, not only Northern regions are the ones with higher cohabitation and extra-marital childbirths, but Southern Italian youth has also the European record for the latest age at leaving home, which is determined by both economic and normative pressures.

⁶⁹ A version of this chapter has been published (in co-authorship with Nazareno Panichella) in the *European Sociological Review* (2011, doi: 10.1093/esr/jcr068). I thank the participants to the *FamIne* seminar held at the University of Trento (December 2, 2010), especially Paolo Barbieri, Carlo Barone, Stefani Scherer and Cristiano Vezzoni, as well as Gabriele Ballarino and Ferruccio Biolcati Rinaldi for their interest in this work. The paper has been presented at the NORFACE and CReAM joint conference (London, April 6-9, 2011) and at the University of Turin and Milan joint Summer School (Turin, September 13-17, 2010).

Introduction

Besides “structural” explanations of decreasing fertility rates based on different institutional settings filtering the effects of increased female labour market attachment (*ibidem*; Del Boca and Wetzels, edited by, 2007), in the second part of the theoretical chapter it has been discussed how other authors have stressed the role of changed preferences toward family and children as an additional explanation for fertility decline. This is, for instance, the core argument of the so-called “Second Demographic Transition” (SDT) thesis (Lesthaeghe and Van de Kaa, 1986; Lesthaeghe, 1995). Although the role of preferences has been discussed in many studies and by different streams of the socioeconomic and demographic literature, and I refer to the first chapter for a discussion, it is much more difficult to assess their real explanatory power.

This chapter aims at contributing to this debate for the Italian case comparing fertility decisions of people living in the North, in the South, and different types of South-to-North migrants in a longitudinal setting. Since the two geographical areas are strongly different both for the institutional and economic conditions and preferences toward family (Rondinelli et al., 2010; Reyneri, 2008), it is argued that comparing those groups represents an interesting empirical strategy to understand to what extent cultural orientations and institutional settings play a role in shaping fertility decisions. Southern internal migrants are socialized to the Southerner model of familiar behaviours, although they share with Northerners the same economic and institutional setting. Thus, adapting a model of transition to parenthood based on the ETF to the Italian context, similarly to what has been already done in the second chapter, the aim of this chapter is to verify if South-to-North migrants’ family behaviours reflect the fertility preferences dominant in their childhood environment.

In doing this, also the main existing theories linking individuals’ migrations and their life-cycles, mainly developed for international migrations (Kulu and Milewski, 2007; Singley and Nancy, 1998; Goldstein and Goldstein, 1981), have been adapted to the Italian context. A lack of longitudinal data on international migrations makes the control of those theories problematic in several aspects. First, the lack of information on the fertility of non-migrants in the area of origin limits our knowledge about the changes in fertility behaviours that are typically associated with migration. Second, a lack of information about the precise timing of migration and fertility further restricts any casual inference that can be made about the migration-fertility relationship. Finally, cross-sectional data lack information on the precise timing of other factors – such as women’s employment or union formation – that might be related to both migration and fertility processes. On the contrary, the case of Italian internal migrations gives us a better chance to test not only the role of preferences to explain North-

South differences, but also alternative theories on the relations between migrants and their life-cycle.

3.1 Micro-Mechanisms of Men's Reproductive Behaviour in Italy and the Role of Preferences

As already mentioned, with the increased opportunity-costs of childrearing generated by rising female earning potentials, it is not surprising that fertility rates have fallen down in all the OECD countries (Ahn and Mira, 2002)⁷⁰. However, in the literature there is clear evidence that the effects of increased female labour market attachment are shaped by different national systems of social and family policies. Cross-country analyses confirmed how the reconciliation of women's work and family duties is easier in both Socialdemocratic and Liberal welfare regimes, less in the Conservative and, above all, in the Mediterranean one (Del Boca and Wetzels, 2007; Sleebos, 2003; Esping-Andersen, 1999). This is claimed to produce the well-known finding of a positive cross-national correlation between female labour market participation and fertility rates, as countries with the lowest fertility rates are those with the lowest female labour market participation (Del Boca and Locatelli, 2007; Ahn and Mira, 2002).

Italy belongs to the Mediterranean model. Here, both the lack of family policies, especially the very limited public provisions of childcare (Knijn and Saraceno, 2010; Hofaecker, 2003), and the rigidity of the labour market regulative system favouring the "exit or full-time model" (Del Boca and Sauer, 2009; Lucchini et al., 2007) contribute to the global outcomes of low fertility as well as female labour market participation rates (Del Boca and Wetzels, 2007).

As far as one is concerned with developing a model of Italian men's micro-mechanisms of transition to parenthood based on the ETF – i.e., on the effects of their own and partners' educational and economic resources – it is necessary to take into account such an institutional setting, as well as gender differences in the effects of those socioeconomic characteristics (Zhang, 2011). This has already been done in the first chapter (par. 1.1.3) and now that discussion is briefly recalled here and adopted to include the potential role of preferences⁷¹.

The ETF predicts negative effects of educational enrolment on the transition to the first union and childbirth for both men and women. These effects are stronger among women the

⁷⁰ Opportunity-costs derive from higher chances of securing well-paid employment as a result of education, accumulated on-the-job skills and experience when women delay the first childbirth (McDonald 2000). The same argument holds when women limit the duration of labour market withdrawals for childrearing (Heckman and Walker, 1990).

⁷¹ The rationale for focusing on men's transitions to parenthood within the aims of this chapter will be explained in the next paragraphs.

more couples adhere to a gender-specific division of labour (for Spain, see Baizán and Martín-García, 2006), hypothesis that has been corroborated for Italy as well in the previous chapter. As mentioned in the first theoretical chapter, once controlling for educational enrolment, Martín-García (2009a) found an interesting effect of the field of study on women's probability of being childless, for women educated in those fields concerned with the care of individuals and/or emphasizing interpersonal skills were found to have a lower probability of being childless than women in scientific and technical ones. Among Spanish men the field of study works in the opposite direction (Martín-García, 2009b), possibly due to the relevance of men's economic resources in Spain as in other Mediterranean countries. As a consequence, the impact of the educational level is not linear among Spanish men, as the transition to the first child is postponed especially among those with secondary education or an university degree in "female oriented" fields. Also this hypothesis about the gendered pattern of effects of the field of study has been corroborated, in the previous chapter, for the Italian case.

Concerning the effects of economic resources, the ETF predicts that among women substitution effect prevails on income effect while the opposite holds among men. Cross-country analyses confirmed these results, especially for Mediterranean countries for they largely rely on the male-breadwinner norm (Esping-Andersen, 1999). Holding a temporary contract has been found to affect negatively the transition to the first child among men, while being in the service class has a positive effect (Bernardi and Nazio, 2005). It has also been found a strong negative effect of being unemployed or not employed among men, while the main predictor of the transition to the first child among women are marriage and homemaking (*ibidem*; Pisati, 2002).

Nevertheless, the effects of being married are very strong even among men, showing a strict sequencing of life-course events. All the impact of economic resources disappear once models control for marital status (*ibidem*), suggesting that large part of the positive effects of economic resources among men are mainly connected with leaving-home and family formation processes (Aassve et al., 2001a).

If we consider higher-order childbirths – therefore the number of children instead of the timing of childbirths – in recent years a positive relation between education and fertility has been found for both men and women, especially in Scandinavian countries (Dribe and Stanfors, 2010; Kravdal, 2007), thus contradicting ETF's predictions. This aspect has not been considered in the previous chapter but will be treated in the following empirical analyses.

This sign reversal could be traced back to husbands' higher share of household and childcare work within highly educated couples (Dribe and Stanfors, 2010; Bonke and Esping-Andersen, 2009). Other scholars suggested that better educated parents may have different

parental values and behaviours comparing with less educated ones (Sayer et al., 2004). Whatever the specific underlying mechanism, this sign reversal should be weaker in Mediterranean countries, as some authors interpreted the positive correlation between fertility and education as an emerging result from wider institutional and cultural settings aiming to overcome the male-breadwinner model in favour higher levels of gender equality (Esping-Andersen, 2009; Dalla Zuanna and Impicciatore, 2008; Brodmann et al, 2007; Kravdal, 2007)⁷².

The gendered pattern of effects of employment and economic resources persists considering higher-order childbirths, although in Italy the global effects of income among women seem negligible (Rondinelli et al., 2010; Baizán, 2005; Giraldo et al., 2004)⁷³. As husbands' income has also been found to be insignificant (Baizán, 2005; Giraldo et al., 2004), these results confirm that leaving home and the family formation process constitute crucial steps for the transition to parenthood, strongly structured by men's economic resources.

Most of these findings have been presented and empirically corroborated in the first and the second chapter. In this chapter, the model of family behaviours based on the ETF and adopted to the Italian setting will be enriched with proxies of preferences toward the family domain, which are often difficult to find in usual longitudinal datasets. One way of operationalizing values has been to assess the fertility impact of religious affiliation (Adsera, 2006; Brañas-Garza and Neuman, 2006; Ongaro, 2001) and beliefs (Zhang, 2011). Zhang argued that the latter are much better predictor of fertility as they allow to grasp the role of religion in guiding human behaviour in terms of the function and the "right" size of families (*ibidem*). Although we have seen, and it will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, that the issue of the religiosity-fertility link is far more complicated than suggested here, these arguments are particularly relevant in the case of Italy, as they might contribute to explain the above-mentioned strong connection between marriage and parenthood, the slow diffusion of cohabitations, separation and divorces as well as North/South differences in fertility rates (Dalla Zuanna, 2001).

⁷² As mentioned in the first chapter, the interpretation of the relations between education and fertility can be more complicated and depending on the methodology adopted. Impicciatore and Dalla Zuanna (2008) did find a positive effect of education on higher-order childbirths in Italy as well, but turning into the "usual" negative correlation once controlling for unobserved heterogeneity due to fertility preferences. The authors link this result to features of the Italian system of family policies not facilitating the reconciliation between work and family duties.

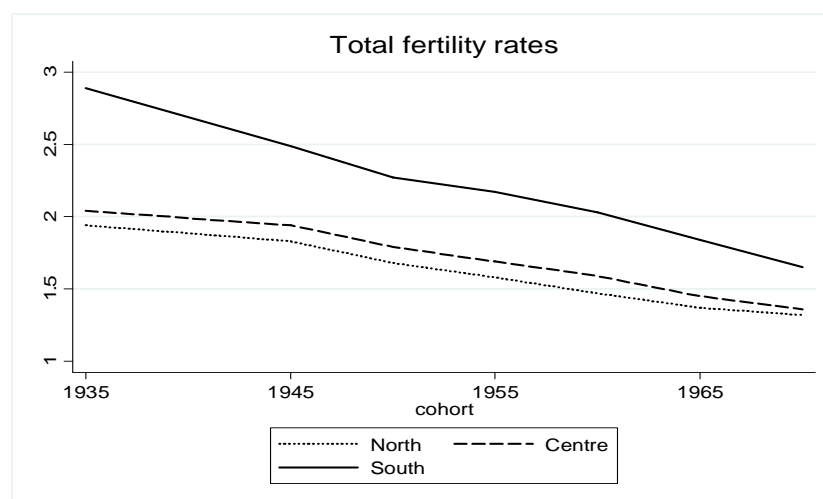
⁷³ In Italy it has been found that both women with very low (or none) and middle income have the highest probability of experiencing higher-order childbirths, suggesting that low-income women face both time and economic constraints to their fertility choices (Baizán, 2005). In this respect, see also results of the previous chapter.

3.2 Differences in Family Formation Between Northern and Southern Italy: Internal Migration as an Interpretative Key

As we have seen in the previous chapter, even after controlling for gender, cohort, educational and occupational differences, in Italy there is strong empirical evidence that reproductive behaviours are systematically different in Southern and Northern Italy (for a comparison, see Rondinelli et al., 2010; Pisati, 2002; Santini, 1995).

Southern Italy has historically been the Italian demographic reservoir, while in the last decades the North has registered the lowest fertility rates of the industrialized world (Dalla Zuanna and Impicciatore, 2008)⁷⁴.

Fig. 14 Total fertility rate Italy, 1935-1970 birth cohorts



Source: Istat

While there is general agreement in the literature concerning territorial differences in fertility rates, it is more difficult to disentangle the causes behind them. Since Southern and Northern Italy differ both in terms of the institutional and economic settings and cultural orientations regarding the relevance of family (Dalla Zuanna, 2001), also in this case it seems reasonable to suppose that such differences are caused by both “structural” and “cultural” factors.

⁷⁴ It has been already discussed in the first chapter how, since the second half of the ‘90s, Italy started to experience a slow but constant increase in fertility rates (Castiglioni and Dalla Zuanna, 2009; Billari, 2008). In addition, recent studies show that, for the first time in Italian history, fertility rate in some Northern regions is higher than in the average Southern one (Del Boca and Rosina, 2009; Castiglioni and Dalla Zuanna, 2009). However, these recent changes affect only marginally the analyses and results presented here.

Regarding the former, since in Italy a trade-off between employment and children for women still persists, and was particularly strong when North-South differences in fertility were huge, it is possible that the lower female labour market participation in the South (Reyneri, 2005) could explain the higher fertility rates. Moreover, once women enter the labour market, it seems reasonable that the opportunity-costs connected with labour market withdrawals are much higher for Northern women. Given the strong insider-outsider setting of the Italian labour market, starting late or interrupting a career can be very costly in terms of earnings and re-employment chances (Del Boca and Sauer, 2009), but much less in Southern Italy because of lower wage levels and career prospects as well as the stronger prevalence of public employment (Rondinelli et al., 2010; Reyneri, 2008), that is far more “family-friendly” for women, as we have seen in the analysis of female labour market participation around childbirths in the previous chapter (see also Bernardi and Nazio, 2005).

However, it is possible to argue as well that Southerners and Northerners tend to give different importance to becoming parents. If this is the case, it is not surprising that young Northerners postpone family formation process and desire a lower number of children in order to enjoy better their leisure time and to invest in labour market careers. More precisely, Southerners may be more attached to a traditional model of family behaviours that in the first chapter has been referred to as “strong family ties”. The latter entail a strong adherence to traditional gender attitudes and the male-breadwinner norm, the centrality of marriage and higher fertility intentions⁷⁵.

Given these premises, it seems justified the use of South-to-North migrations as a key for a better understanding of the role of “structural” and “cultural” factors in the transition to parenthood. Family formation and fertility decisions of men living in the North, in the South and different types of South-to-North migrants will be analysed. The last one is interpreted as a critical group because Southern internal migrants are socialized to the Southerner model of familiar behaviours, although they share the same economic and institutional setting with Northerners. More precisely, by means of a model of transition to parenthood for Italian men based on the literature presented in the first chapter, it will be tested if a) North and South of Italy significantly differ in terms of fertility decisions and b) whether or not South-to-North migrants’ family behaviours reflect the fertility preferences dominant in their childhood environment. In order to point out some precise research hypotheses on the relations between

⁷⁵ Although it has been discussed how, in a post-fordist society with increasing female educational attainment, strong family ties can be directly and indirectly conducive to low fertility rates. As suggested by Santow and Bracher (2009), in Southern Europe the size of the family can be negatively correlated to the value attached to children.

migration and fertility decisions, the literature concerning geographical mobility and its effects on individuals' life-cycle has to be taken into account.

3.3 Internal Migration and Fertility Decisions

The existing literature on the effects of geographical mobility on fertility decisions typically identifies four mechanisms linking migration and fertility: socialization, selection, adaptation and disruption (Goldstein and Goldstein, 1983)⁷⁶. The *socialization* hypothesis refers to the tendency of migrants to reflect the fertility preferences dominant in their childhood environment: migrants exhibit similar fertility levels to “stayers” at origin, and the convergence towards fertility levels of population at destination occurs only in the following generations (Caldwell, 1982). This hypothesis emphasises the critical role of the childhood environment, where norms and values dominant in a migrant's childhood environment guide his/her later actions in other places as well (Mayer and Riphahn, 2000; Hertz, 1985; Goldberg 1959, 1960).

The second mechanism through which migration affects fertility is the *adaptation* to the fertility regime of the destination. This could be associated with the assimilation theory (see, for instance, Massey et al., 1993) and it argues that fertility is determined both by the social and cultural norms of the current residential environment (Caldwell, 1982) and by the different households' income, wages and constraints in prices and incomes (Becker, 1991). In short, exposure to different socio-cultural norms and costs of childbearing changes fertility behaviour, to the point that migrants' fertility tends to converge with that of the natives at destination⁷⁷. As a further complexity, migrants may do more than adapt, in the sense that their fertility behaviour might reflect a particularly keen desire to advance economically (Dalla Zuanna, 2006), a scenario described as the *social mobility hypothesis* in the internal migration-fertility literature (Singley and Nancy, 1998).

Yet this debate is complicated by a potential bias. The *selection* hypothesis, in fact, claims that migrants constitute a specific group of people whose fertility preferences are more

⁷⁶ It is important to point out that this framework is generally used in order to analyse the rural-urban migration, but it seems useful also to analyse the Italian internal migration phenomena. It is well-known indeed that Italian internal migrations involved mainly Southerners from the rural area (Treves, 1976; Barberis, 1960) and that the major industrial areas in North-Western Italy (concentrated in the “industrial triangle” of Milan, Turin and Genoa), together with Rome, were powerful points of attraction (Bonifazi and Heins, 2000; Ginsborg 1989).

⁷⁷ A strict and mechanical application of the adaptation notion would suggest that movers from high income (corresponding to low fertility) areas to lower income (corresponding to high fertility) areas exhibit increases in childbearing. Unfortunately in our dataset we do not have enough cases of North-to-South migrants to test this hypothesis.

similar to people at destination rather than at origin. Such hypothesis has been discussed in many papers, but it was empirically examined only by a few studies (Zarate and Zarate, 1975; Goldstein, 1973; Myers and Morris, 1966). For the Italian internal migration, this mechanism can be related to the “anticipated socialization” described by Alberoni and Baglioni (1965). The authors claimed that internal migrants were characterized by different personality traits or behavioural intentions rather than those who remained in the South, i.e. they were those who acquired values and behavioural models of the destination country before they left their own country.

Finally, it is also possible that migrants show particularly low levels of fertility due to the disruptive factors associated with the migration process. The effect of *disruption*, which has been studied most often in relation to temporary migration, tends to lower the fertility of migrants compared with non-migrants (Kahn, 1994; Ford, 1990; Ram and George, 1990; Carlson, 1985). This inference may derive from seasonal factors (Massey and Mullan, 1984), spousal separation (Visaria, 1969), or from the typical costs associated with migrations (Hervitz, 1985). It is also plausible that disruption could reflect some initial adaptation strategy, where normal plans for childbearing are temporarily set aside while economic (but not cultural) adjustments to the new society are made. The effects of disruption, however, are posited to be temporary and occurring only during a short period of time after geographical movements. Then, fertility may resume its previous level, or even accelerate in order to compensate for the disruption (Sharma, 1992).

Of course these four mechanisms could be not mutually exclusive. For conceptual clarity, the patterns are described in their “pure” forms, but the processes they represent are more likely to be complementary than competing (Singley and Nancy, 1998) and operating at different stages of the migration process. For instance, it is possible that there is socialization, but in the short period the disruptive effects of the migration could make migrants unable to reproduce the fertility pattern of the South. Adaptation is also possible in the long run (namely for second generations of migrants), while in the short run migrants manifest the fertility behaviours of the region of origin.

While contradictory conclusions in the literature often arise because different historical periods, social contexts and types of migration are analysed, the dependence on cross-sectional data of studies concerning migrants’ fertility has significantly limited the possibilities to clarify which view is true in the respective context and for the behaviours of the particular migrants’ group (Kulu and Milewski, 2007). On the opposite, in the case of Italian internal migration it is possible to make some clear distinctions allowing to test the validity of these competing theories of the relations between migrations and transition to childbirths. Firstly, we are able to

control the socialization and the selection hypotheses comparing the fertility decisions of Northerners, Southerners and internal migrants. Secondly, in order to test the assimilation hypothesis in the long run, we take into account also migrants' children. Finally, to control the disruption effect, we analyze both the transition to the first child – where, following the theory, the costs of geographical mobility are higher – and the transition to the second child, where such costs should be lower.

In the next paragraph this theoretical framework will be systematised and applied to the Italian case and the research hypotheses of the chapter will be presented.

3.3.1 *A model for Italian men's fertility decisions: assumptions and hypotheses*

The research questions of the chapter will focus on men for three reasons. First of all, the typical Italian internal migration usually implies that men migrate first to search for a job, while their partners later rejoin them (Arru and Ramella, edited by, 2003; Ramella, 2001; Reyneri 1979)⁷⁸. Secondly, we have seen how in the Italian setting men's contribution to the household's income is still much more important than women's one, therefore the theoretical arguments concerning the importance of economic resources mainly apply to men. Finally, focusing on men's transition to parenthood has its own values as the latter has been much less studied in socio-demographic literature (Zhang, 2011).

The transition to parenthood of Italian men can be summarized as follows:

$$U = f(R, E, Woc, P, Mc) \quad (1)$$

+ - - ± -

where U is the utility, R denotes the economic resources and earning potentials, E represents time spent in the educational system, Woc are women's opportunity-costs, P are the preferences toward parenthood and Mc are the migration costs.

It is assumed that the negative impact of Woc in the North is higher than in the South ($Woc_n > Woc_s$). As it has been described in the paragraph 3.2 of this chapter, this is the case not only at the macro-level, since employment rates of Southern women are lower, but also at the micro-level, for Southern women labour market participation entails less opportunity-costs.

It also assumed that Northerners' preferences are on average lower than those of the Southerners ($P_n < P_s$), although potentially varying within individuals' life-cycles. Regarding

⁷⁸ It should be noticed that among more recent waves of Southern migrants, starting from the second half of the '90s, the latter's sociodemographic profile changed quite a lot. I shall come back on this later on, see note 103.

migrants, if they are a self-selected group or fast adaptation takes place, their preferences are equal to those of the Northerners ($P_m = P_n$); on the contrary, if the socialization hypothesis is verified, their preferences are equal to those of the Southerners ($P_m = P_s$). Finally, since we have seen that geographical mobility could cause disruption effects, the equation includes a term for migration costs (M_c). Obviously such term is equal to zero for Southerners and Northerners ($M_c = 0$), while it could be higher than zero for migrants ($M_c \geq 0$). Even if most of migration costs are effective in the short-run (e.g. travel costs, spousal separation, searching for housing), it is likely that their effects on fertility could persist given that migrations have disruptive effects also on the informal networks to which migrants can rely on for childrearing. However, it is reasonable to assume that migrations costs are higher in the short run, i.e. as far as the transition to the first child is concerned.

If the differences between Northerners and Southerners are only the manifestation of compositional factors (age, individuals' and their wives' education and employment, etc.), then suitable controls would remove all regional effects. In this case it would be possible to test only the disruption mechanism (M_c), because the term P would be equal between Northerners and Southerners. But, if some differences still persist, it makes sense to test also the socialization and the selection hypotheses. In Tab. 11 several hypotheses concerning the speed at each transition for Northerners, Southerners and migrants are presented, based on the discussed theories.

The table suggests that:

- a) if migrants are faster than Northerners in any of the transitions, then the selection hypothesis is rejected;
- b) if we do observe that migrants are faster than Northerners, then the socialization hypothesis is confirmed. But, as there could still be significant disruption effects at the transition to the first child, we could observe migrants to be faster than Northerners only at the second childbirth;
- c) finally, if the adaptation hypothesis is proved, we should observe that the second generation of migrants is similar to Northerners in both transitions.

Tab. 11 **Speed at childbirths for Southerners, Northerners and migrants according to different migration theories**

		Socialization ($P_m=P_s$)	Selection or adaptation in the short run ($P_m=P_n$)	Adaptation in the long run (second generation of migrants) ($P_m \rightarrow P_n$)
Without disruption	<i>First child</i> ($C_m=0$)	Migrants as fast as Southerners, both faster than Northerners	No differences between migrants and Northerners, both slower than Southerners	No differences between migrants and Northerners, both slower than Southerners
	<i>Second child</i> ($C_m=0$)	Migrants as fast as Southerners, both faster than Northerners	No differences between migrants and Northerners, both slower than Southerners	No differences between migrants and Northerners, both slower than Southerners
With Disruption	<i>First child</i> ($C_m>0$)	Migrants slower than Southerners	Migrants slower than Northerners and Southerners	
	<i>Second child</i> ($C_m \approx 0$)	Migrants as fast as Southerners, both faster than Northerners	No differences between migrants and Northerners, both slower than Southerners	

It is necessary to add some caveats to the theoretical framework presented above and the hypotheses that have been drawn from it⁷⁹. First, in order to allow for a consistent interpretation of the results concerning North-South differences in terms of the existence of a mentioned “Southerner model of familiar behaviours”, which is transmitted during socialization, it would be necessary to include in the models some measures of values and attitudes toward the family domain. But we have seen how this is not possible with the ILFI data and regional differences have been exploited precisely as a proxy for cultural orientations. Therefore, the expected differences between Southerner migrants and Northerners will be interpreted as socialization effects by means of what could be called a “residual explanation” after controlling for socioeconomic characteristics. It should be recognized how this is far from being an optimal strategy, because of the impossibility to include all the suitable control

⁷⁹ This discussion benefited from very useful comments by Nan Dirk de Graaf, Bart Meuleman and Arnstein Aassve.

variables and because direct tests of values and attitudes would need to take seriously into account measurement problems, as it will be discussed in the next chapter.

In order to reinforce the argument about the role of the socialization to different family values in explaining North-South differences, a necessary, although not sufficient, strategy is to show that Northern and Southern Italian regions a) do differ in terms of values and attitudes toward the family domain and that b) the latter are shaped during socialization. Following the argumentation presented in the first chapter, the pattern of family behaviours consistent with the above mentioned Southerner model implies an exit from the parental home for marriage, without previous experiences of cohabitations, forming a male-breadwinner family with at least two children (Santow and Bracher, 1999)⁸⁰. Therefore, before testing the hypotheses concerning South-North migrations, IARD data (2004) will be used to show how in Southern regions young people aged 15-29 have a lower degree of acceptance of cohabitation, both as a substitute and a “preparation” for marriage, more traditional gender attitudes and higher fertility intentions. Moreover, it will be shown how this North-South divide is explained only to a very limited extent by the young’s socioeconomic family background (parents’ education and social class), while more important are the levels of religiosity of both parents and their offspring as proxy of the socialization to different family values⁸¹. If such a traditional pattern of family values is still dominant in Southern regions in 2004, one might expect North-South differences in values to be even more relevant for previous cohorts, at least as far as fertility intentions, when fertility rates were much higher in Southern regions than in Northern ones (see Fig. 14).

A second caveat refers to the way the selection hypothesis has been defined. In fact, migrants are mostly intended here as being in a sort of “intermediate” position, in terms of family preferences, between Northerners and static Southerners. If the selection mechanisms are much stronger than the socialization ones, Southern migrants family behaviours are expected not to differ from Northerners’ ones. Although based on the literature concerning the relations between international migrations and fertility discussed above, one may interpret this as a narrow interpretation of the selection hypothesis, for migrants may be a selective group with

⁸⁰ Santow and Bracher report a Southern Italian woman living in Australia, at the beginning of the ‘80s, clearly depicting the idea of unions (marriages) as the place devoted to the reproduction: “one is too few, two is okay, *if it’s a girl and a boy*. When one first marries, truly in the first years you are content a bride – content with your life, but after three or four years *if you can’t have children, you are lost...* [italics added]” (1999: 68).

⁸¹ The number of siblings is assumed to influence youngs’ family norms and fertility preferences, once crucial variables concerning the familiar socioeconomic background are controlled for. It has been suggested how the number of siblings influence men’ and women’s timing and number of children and that such effect is neither explained by parents’ nor mediated by individuals’ educational attainment and socioeconomic status (Kolk, 2011).

regard to many characteristics, apart from family values, potentially having positive effects on fertility behaviours. This issue will be treated further in the next paragraphs.

3.4 Data, Variables and Methods

In this chapter data from the IARD survey on the condition of Italian youth (2004) will be analysed. The IARD survey is a repeated cross-section (six waves from 1983 to 2004) carried out by the IARD institute on representative samples of the Italian youth population. It is possibly the most important source of statistical information on youth values, behaviours and socioeconomic conditions available to the Italian researcher⁸². Many value domains have been investigated in the survey, including crucial information concerning parental values and socioeconomic conditions, and a relatively large sample size is available for a focused analysis of youth. Following the postponement of the transition to adulthood in the last decades, the definition of “youth” changed dramatically across waves, including individuals aged 15-24 in 1983 and 15-34 in the last 2004 wave⁸³. The 2004 survey adopted a two-stage stratified sampling procedure. In the first stage, Italian municipalities (“*Comuni*”) have been randomly sampled, stratified by their population size and geographical location. Within the selected municipalities, individuals aged 18-34 have been randomly sampled based on the electoral lists and stratified by age and gender, in order to reproduce the Italian population age structure and following the rule that at least one interview should have been conducted in each of the 103 Italian provinces⁸⁴. Interviews have been carried out by means of the CAPI procedure. As far as individuals aged 15-17, a snowball sampling procedure has been followed. More precisely, each interviewee aged 18-34, selected with the random sampling procedure, has been asked to indicate several names of people aged 15-17 living close to him/her. Then, based on the obtained list, a random sample of minors has been selected, proportionally to their presence in the Italian population.

As far as the three dependent variables of the analyses presented in the next paragraphs, attitudes toward cohabitation and fertility intentions of the Italian young aged 15-29 will be analysed by means of multinomial logistic regressions, while gender attitudes will be analysed by means of OLS regressions. Attitudes toward cohabitation are defined as a variable with three categories distinguishing individuals between those who always approve cohabitation, those

⁸² See Buzzi et al. (2007) for a substantive analysis of the findings related to the last 2004 wave used in this chapter.

⁸³ This quite large definition of “youth” is justified in the Italian case if we consider that, in the 2004 IARD dataset, almost 90% of individuals aged 15-29 are still living in the parental home.

⁸⁴ Each municipality has the list from the registry office and must upgrade it by law every six months.

who only approve it as a preparation for marriage and those who never approve it. Fertility intentions are defined in five categories, the first two grouping the young between those who still never thought about having children and those who do not know yet the exact number of children they are going to have. Then, expressed fertility intentions have been recoded in three categories distinguishing between those who think they will have no or one child at most from those who expect 2 and 3 or more children. Since the focus is on the degree of acceptance of the male-breadwinner norm, gender attitudes have been operationalized as the first principal component factor score drawn by four indicators measuring the degree of agreement (ranging from 1 “not at all” to 4 “very much”) to the following statements: “it’s a man’s duty to provide for the family”, “a man is legitimate to command at home”, “labour market success is more important for a man”, “the wife should stay at home to care for young children”⁸⁵.

The main independent variable is the area of residence (Centre-North vs. South)⁸⁶, while intervenient variables are respondents’ and their parents’ levels of religiosity as well as respondents’ number of siblings recoded from 0 to 4 or more. Religiosity is captured by a measure of importance of religion (5 categories from “not believer” to “very much important”) and church attendance (5 categories from “never” to “at least once a week”) as far as the young are concerned. A measure of importance of religion (4 categories ranging from “not at all” to “very much”) for both mothers’ and fathers’ religiosity have been used and combined in a single variable ranging from 0 to 4 to avoid problems of collinearity.

In addition to sex and age, as relevant antecedent variables fathers’ and mothers’ educational levels in 4 categories (elementary, lower-secondary, upper-secondary and tertiary), fathers’ social class (profession recoded in 8 categories: entrepreneurs and managers, professionals and middle management, teachers and higher grade routine non-manuals, lower grade routine non-manuals, urban petite bourgeoisie, agricultural petite bourgeoisie, skilled manuals and unskilled manuals) and mothers’ employment condition and social class (working vs. non-working and profession recoded as for fathers) have been included⁸⁷.

The data used for the longitudinal analyses of the relations between South-North migrations and family behaviours are the same ILFI data used in the second chapter and I refer to par. 2.1 in that chapter for additional methodological information. By merging all the five available waves (1997-2005), a person-month dataset with geographical, educational,

⁸⁵ The four indicators load similarly on the selected factor, which explains 53% of the total variance with a Cronbach’s alpha of .71.

⁸⁶ From now on, “Northern Italy” include all Central and Northern regions according to the ISTAT definition: Aosta Valley, Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy, Trentino Alto-Adige, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, Marche and Lazio. “Southern Italy” include all others regions and islands: Abruzzo, Molise, Apulia, Campania, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicily and Sardinia.

⁸⁷ A limitation of the data is that all information (education, employment and religiosity) referring to parents is only indirectly measured, i.e. reported by the respondents.

employment and family histories of 3,500 men born in the period 1932-1975, as well as some time-constant social background characteristics, has been obtained⁸⁸. The independent variable is a time-varying one regarding a typology of geographical mobility. In ILFI data, individuals experience an episode of geographical mobility when they change their province of residence. I consider three kinds of South-to-North migrants, whose behaviours can be compared with individuals never moving from Northern Italy. This variable contains the following statuses:

- a) *Southerners*: Southerners who have never (or not yet) moved from the South;
- b) *migrants*: Southerners after moving towards Northern regions;
- c) *returned*: migrants after coming back to the South;
- d) *commuters*: Southerners with more than two residential episodes between Southern and Northern Italy⁸⁹.

Tab. 12 **Territorial origin and migration history at 45 years old**

	%	(N)
Northerners	57,9	(2.027)
Generation 1.5	2,5	(87)
Southerners	30,7	(1.076)
Migrants	5,1	(178)
Returned	2,7	(94)
Commuters	1,0	(38)
Total	100,0	(3.500)

Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005).

In order to test the assimilation hypothesis in the long run, also the second generation of immigrants has been included in the analysis, although the limited number of cases did not allow to make accurate distinctions within this group. Moreover, it was not possible to include the second generation of migrants born in Northern regions in the analysis, because they are too young to study their familiar transitions. However, within the group of Northerners it has been distinguished a category for the so-called “generation 1.5” (Rumbaut, 1997), i.e. children of

⁸⁸ About 300 cases have been lost for missing information on social class and class of origin. No statistical difference have been found among these cases and the ones included in the analyses in terms of fundamental sociodemographic characteristics.

⁸⁹ As they are very few, commuters have been included in the typology only to control for the effects of more “challenging” migration projects and their results are not shown.

Southerners who moved to the North following their parents before they were 15 years old and then never coming back to the South.

All models control for five birth cohorts: 1932-1940, 1941-1949, 1950-1958, 1959-1967, 1968-1975.

As in the models of transition to parenthood presented in the second chapter, information concerning the educational history is threefold, entailing educational enrolment, level and field of study⁹⁰. First of all, all models include a time-varying dummy indicating whether individuals are enrolled in the educational system or not. Then a time-varying variable concerning the level of education attained (elementary, lower-secondary, higher-secondary and tertiary) has been included. The higher-secondary level has been operationalized in three categories: “gender neutral” (*licei*), “female-oriented” (teacher training and education science, fine and applied art, foreign languages and vocational programmes in the commercial field) and “male-oriented” (vocational programmes in the industrial and craft sectors)⁹¹. The tertiary level has been divided into “female-oriented” and “male-oriented” too. The former includes teacher training and education sciences, humanities, social and behavioural sciences, law and medicine; the latter entails all other fields (natural sciences, economics and statistics, engineering and architecture).

Employment histories are included in models by means of three time-varying variables, more or less the same already used in the second chapter. The first one entails the employment condition, distinguishing whether individuals are employed, unemployed or out of the labour market. Secondly, individual social class – as well as social class of origin – has been coded following a variation on the EGP class schema, adapting it to Italian society (Cobalti and Schizzerotto, 1994). The scheme used here includes *bourgeoisie* (big entrepreneurs, managers and professionals) as the highest class. The two middle classes are the *white collars* and the (urban and agricultural) *petty bourgeoisie*. The first includes non-manual employees and corresponds to classes IIIa and IIIb of the EGP scheme; the second incorporates small employers (up to fifteen employees) and self-employed workers and corresponds to classes IVa, IVb and IVc of the EGP scheme. Finally, the scheme includes a *working class* category, again distinguishing urban and agricultural workers. This encompasses both manual skilled and the unskilled urban working class as well as the agricultural working class. Thirdly, the type of contract has been included to distinguish individuals’ employment relation and it is subdivided

⁹⁰ The only difference here is that a slightly different definition of the fields of study has been applied, comparing with the second chapter. The aim was to replicate as much as possible the similar study by Martín-García published in the *European Sociological Review* (2010).

⁹¹ Following Martín-García (2009; 2010), all “female-oriented” fields of study are related to the care of individuals or involve relational skills.

into five categories: permanent contract, “traditional” self-employment, “atypical” employment (fixed-term contracts and pseudo-self employment), seasonal and off-the-books jobs⁹².

Models analysing the transition to the first and second childbirths include a time-varying dummy variable indicating whether individuals are married/cohabiting or not⁹³, wives’ educational level in 4 categories (elementary, lower-secondary, higher-secondary and tertiary) and a time-varying dummy on their employment condition (employed/not employed)⁹⁴. When the dependent process is the second childbirth, men’s age at the first child has been added.

Three durations are modelled: the month of the first union and the months of the first and second childbirths – only for those who experienced the first childbirth. Although the research hypotheses do not deal with the transition to the first union, the latter is crucial to understand Italian men’s reproductive behaviours to the extent that childbirths and marriages are closely interrelated in Italy. Moreover, it has been mentioned how the processes of family formation and migration are often part of the same action plan.

The observational window begins at the age of 15 and ends with the month of the first union or the birth of the first or second child. When studying the transition to the second child, observation begins at the month of the first birth and ends with the second childbirth. In all models, observation ends at the age of 45 for right-censored cases.

The three dependent processes are studied by means of Cox models. These are proportional hazard semi-parametric duration models having the advantage of estimating the coefficients for the independent variables without making assumptions about the distribution of survival times. The latter could represent a good choice for reasons of homogeneity among models, as processes characterized by potentially different types of time-dependency will be analysed⁹⁵.

3.5 Empirical evidence

In Tab. 13 results of the regression models applied to the IARD data are presented.

⁹² The typology of employment relations is based on Barbieri and Scherer’s distinction between “typical” and “atypical” employment (2009), including in the latter all forms of non-standard employment relations developed in most of the OECD countries in the last 30 years (Esping-Andersen and Regini, edited by, 2000).

⁹³ Cohabitations were extremely rare events in Italy among the selected cohorts, being about 2% of the unions included in our sample. Therefore, they have been considered as marriages.

⁹⁴ Only information about partners at the moment of the interview is available. While this causes an additional source of missing cases, such an information can be considered a good proxy given the limited numbers of separations and divorces as well as the strict connection between marriage and childbirths (Gutiérrez-Domènech, 2005).

⁹⁵ Results showed to be robust regardless of the method used. For a brief introduction to duration models and the interpretation of the results see par. 2.1 in the second chapter.

Tab. 13 North-South differences in family values
(individuals aged 15-29)

		<i>Only before marriage vs. Always</i>			<i>Never vs. Always</i>		
		Model I	Model II^a	Model III^b	Model I	Model II^a	Model III^b
		(no controls)	(socioeconomic background)	(socioeconomic background + socialization)	(no controls)	(socioeconomic background)	(socioeconomic background + socialization)
Attitudes toward cohabitation^c N=1931	South	1.185*	1.123	.988	3.998***	3.327***	2.913***
		Pseudo-R2: .03	Pseudo-R2: .06	Pseudo-R2: .15	Pseudo-R2: .03	Pseudo-R2: .06	Pseudo-R2: .15
				<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>		
Traditional gender attitudes^d N=1027	South	.227***	.253***	.152*	.043	-.087	-.182**
		R2: .12 Adj. R2: .12	R2: .22 Adj. R2: .18	R2: .27 Adj. R2: .22	R2: .12 Adj. R2: .12	R2: .22 Adj. R2: .18	R2: .27 Adj. R2: .22
				<i>2 children vs. 1 child at most</i>	<i>3 > children vs. 1 child at most</i>		
Fertility intentions^e N=2070	South	2.075***	2.000***	1.452	2.708***	2.623***	1.807**
		Pseudo-R2: .01	Pseudo-R2: .03	Pseudo-R2: .06	Pseudo-R2: .01	Pseudo-R2: .03	Pseudo-R2: .06

***: $p < 0.01$; **: $p < 0.05$; *: $p < 0.10$. ^a Controls for age, gender, mother's and father's educational attainment, mother's employment condition and social class and father's social class not shown. ^b Additional controls for number of siblings, parents' and individuals' religiosity not shown. ^c Odds-ratios after multinomial logit regressions. ^d Coefficients of OLS regressions. The dependent variable is a principal component factor score drawn by four indicators (see page 103). ^e Odds-ratios after multinomial logit regressions. Results for the odds of having "1 child at most" vs. "don't know" and "I never thought about it" not shown.

Source: own elaboration based on IARD (2004).

The analyses of the three dependent variables follow the same rationale and results from three nested regression models are shown. First, the bivariate correlation between young's area of residence and each value measure is estimated. Then, age, gender and those parental characteristics which define young respondents' socioeconomic background are included. Finally, the models are augmented with those variables posited to capture the socialization to different family values⁹⁶.

Results concerning attitudes toward cohabitations show that while young Southerners and Northerners do not differ with respect to cohabitation as a preparation to marriage, the former are much less inclined to approve cohabitation as a substitute of marriage. It is worth noticing how the strong positive odds-ratio related to young Southerners' relative chances of never accepting cohabitation remains almost unchanged after the inclusion of many intervenient variables, although the increase of the Pseudo-R2 in Model III suggests that values, and especially individuals' importance of religion and church attendance, matter a lot with respect

⁹⁶ See Tab. 13 and previous paragraph for details about the variables included at each step.

to the attitudes toward cohabitation. The result is consistent with the prevalence, in the Southern Italian society, of a strong social norm fostering traditional family formation, regardless of individuals' socioeconomic resources and cultural orientations.

Results concerning traditional gender attitudes show a quite huge gender differentiation⁹⁷. While Southern Italian young women do not differ from Northerner ones, or even show a lower support for the male-breadwinner norm, after controlling for parents' and their own cultural orientations, Southern Italian young men are found to be significantly more in accordance with it. The socioeconomic background does have an important predictive power, especially mother's educational level among men and mother's employment condition among women, but it does not explain Southerner men's more traditional gender attitudes comparing with their Northerner counterparts. On the opposite, the latter are accounted for by about 40% by the cultural variables, with individuals' religiosity being again the most important intervenient factor. In all models, parents' religiosity only has indirect effects on their children's values and attitudes, filtered by the latter's religious orientation.

Finally, as far as fertility intentions are concerned, it should be noticed the much lower predictive power of the selected variables. In fact, a large number of young still had no idea or never thought about their fertility intention at the moment of the interview (about 50% of the sample)⁹⁸. Moreover, about half of the young who did express a fertility preference opted for the "two children" answer, maybe reproducing a social norm for an "ideal" family size more than real fertility intentions (Goldstein et al., 2003). Nevertheless, the pattern of responses shows some interesting North-South differences, since young Southerners were strongly reluctant to answer with none or one child at most. Moreover, while respondents' socioeconomic background does not contribute at all to explain Southerners' higher preferences for two or more children rather than one at most, cultural variables play a substantial role: the odds of the intention to have two children rather than one at most is not significantly different between Northern and Southern Italy in Model III, while young Southerners' higher propensity to opt for more than two children rather than one at most is reduced by 31%.

⁹⁷ The parameters are taken from three nested OLS regression models in which the "South" dummy is interacted with sex, as well as the latter is interacted with other independent variables where necessary. The N is substantially reduced comparing with other models because the questions concerning gender attitudes have been asked only to a random half of the total IARD sample.

⁹⁸ This is the main cause of the low predictive power of the included variables: an OLS model predicting the probability to have answered with "don't now"/"never thought about it" rather than with a stated preference, using all the variables of Model III in Tab. 11, reaches an R2 of barely 4%. Southerners show higher chances of positive answers, so that the main North-South difference is that Southerners have substantially lower chances to have answered with 0 or 1 child. This is consistent with the idea that where traditional family values prevail, one might decide to postpone marriage and having children, especially if economic prospects are uncertain. But if a family is formed, then the (at least) two children norm applies.

The above mentioned results give some hints confirming the existence of a peculiar model of family behaviours young Southerners are still socialized to in 2004. I argue that these differences between Southerners and Northerners could be even larger, especially as far fertility intentions, when fertility rates were much higher in the North than in the South. The next analyses will try to understand what are the consequences of having been socialized to a more traditional model of family behaviours when Southerners migrate to the North: are migrants able to realize their higher preference toward marriage and children, thus confirming the role of the socialization effects, and in which ways the latter are shaped by the migration process and its disruptional consequences? How much does the exposition to a new institutional, economic and cultural environment produce an adaptation to Northerners' behaviours? Are there differences between 1 and 1.5 generation migrants in this respect? It is necessary to move to the ILFI data to address these questions.

Fig. 15 presents median ages at the transitions to the first union and child and North-South differences for the selected cohorts of the ILFI data⁹⁹. Italian men's postponement of the transition to familiar events appears clearly in the upper half of the graph, being stronger among Northerners. Moreover, in the lower part of the graph we see how, after a little decrease between the first and the second cohort, the time-span between the first union and the first child increases across cohorts. But, again, this holds especially for Northerners.

These descriptive findings can be interpreted in light of the theoretical antithesis between the "institutional-labour market" and the SDT theses. On the one hand, the U-shaped pattern of familiar transitions seems to cast doubts on the prevalence of ideational shifts. The cohorts born in the first decades of the XXth century had to face the economic downturn of the '30s as well as of the two World Wars; the post-war cohorts enjoyed the economic boom between the '50s and '60s, while, since the late '70s, and especially during the '90s, the situation has been worsened by the effects of labour market deregulations (Mills et al., 2005; for Italy, see Barbieri, edited by, forthcoming).

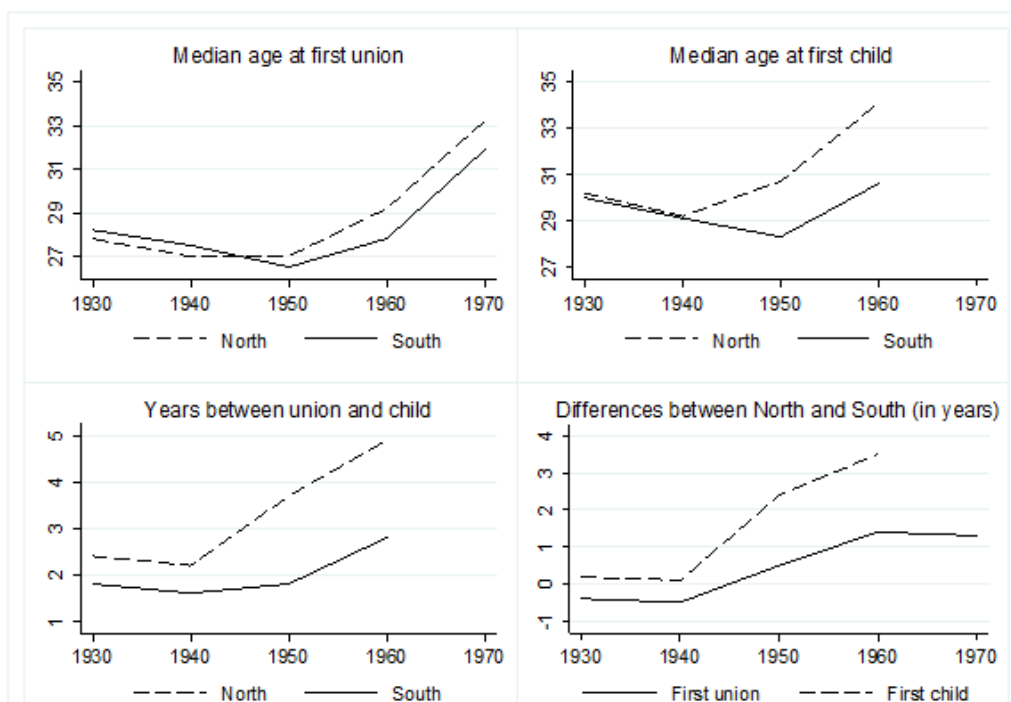
On the other hand, the dramatic and rapid increase in North/South differences concerning the distance between first union and first child puts on the table the issue of different preferences toward parenthood. Fig. 15 could suggest that in the South family is still the place devoted to the reproduction, while in the North partnerships are becoming increasingly independent from reproductive behaviours, accordingly to the arguments of the SDT (see, for instance, Caldwell and Schindlmayr, 2003) and following the recent rise in cohabitations (Castiglioni and Dalla Zuanna, 2009). But it should also be noticed how this pattern closely

⁹⁹ South-to-North migrants are excluded from this analysis.

follows the different levels and paces of increase of female labour market participation in the two areas (Reyneri, 2008, 2005).

Disentangling between these alternative interpretations requires a stricter empirical test including South-to-North migrations in the analysis. In Tab. 14 Cox models to study Italian's men transitions toward first union and child are presented.

Fig. 15 Kaplan-Meier estimates of the median ages at the first union and at the first child (upper part of the graph); differences (in years) between first union and first child and differences (in years) between North and South in the transition to the first child and first union



Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005).

Models I-III analyse the effects of men's educational and economic resources on the transition to the first union. As we have already seen, once controlling for the strong negative effects of educational enrolment, the level of education has non-linear effects (Model I). Individuals with tertiary education in "male oriented" fields of study are as fast as those with only primary education in the transition to the first union. The slowest ones are men with secondary education in "gender neutral" fields of study (*licei*), given the total absence of a vocational orientation. These results largely overlap those of Martín-García (2010) for Spanish men and underline the crucial role of economic resources and earning potentials on men's demographic behaviours. Therefore, it is not surprising that having a stable job is fundamental

for Italian men in order to make the transition to the first stable union (Model II). Finally, the role of economic resources is confirmed by looking at the lower risks of experiencing the first childbirth among men in the working class (Model III).

As for the effects of territorial origin and migration history, all categories of Southerners (migrants and not, including generation 1.5) are faster than Northerners in making the transition to the first union, even after controlling for educational and employment histories.

This empirical finding could be considered as a first indication supporting the role of preferences toward family, at least in the timing of the transition to the first marriage, but two aspects should be considered. First, it is possible that the shortest duration to marriage is due to partners' employment condition during the engagement period, something can not be controlled for in the analyses. Second, looking more carefully at the pattern of effects, it is possible to see that Southerners are slower than migrants who, in turn, are slower than returned migrants. This result can be easily understood in the frame of international and internal migration theories, which showed how family formation is part of the migration project itself (Kulu and Milewski, 2007; Mulder and Wagner, 1993). Therefore, each migratory episode is connected with higher risks of marriage as the latter constitute highly interlinked events (*ibidem*).

On the other side, the highest risk of marriage comparing with Northerners among the 1.5 generation migrant group is more supporting of the effects of preferences and it should be noticed how such risk becomes significant only after controlling for the employment condition (Model II). This confirms how making the migration during infancy or early childhood can bring to a double socialization and cultural asymmetries. Moreover, the interruption of the educational process and the integration in the new school system could represent sources of disadvantages eventually producing inequalities and marginalization in subsequent work careers, which did not allow to observe 1.5 generation migrants' higher preference toward marriage without controlling for the employment condition.

Once we model the month of the first childbirth, controlling for the month of the first union, results depict a quite different picture (Model IV). First of all, almost all the effects of individuals' education and employment disappear, thus confirming how parenthood (and leaving home) is strongly linked to marriage in the Italian context. Moreover, migrants and their children seem to be as fast as Northerners in the transition, while Southerners and returned migrants are still much faster than all other groups. This could be interpreted as the role of different socialization models among Southerners/returned migrants, while we do not know whether migrants who remain in the North are similar to Northerners because of a selection mechanism, fast adaptation to new structural conditions or high disruptive effects (see Tab.

11). Some additional hints on this point come from the analysis of the transition to the second child and controlling for wives' labour market participation.

Starting from the latter, while Model V shows how the pattern of results does not change if we focus only on individuals who got married, in Model VI we see that if individuals' wife is employed, the distance between first union and first child dramatically increases, as effect of the work-family trade-off widely treated in the second chapter. Moreover, as predicted by the theoretical model presented in paragraph 3.3.1, given their lower opportunity-costs, those negative effects are much weaker among Southerners and returned migrants¹⁰⁰. In addition, if we look at the differences between non-migrant Southerners and Northerners when their wife is not employed, we may notice that the higher speed among Southerners men almost disappears, remaining significant only at the 10% level.

The last finding shows that the overall role of preferences in explaining North/South differences in the timing of the transition to the first child is rather negligible, although possibly present. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suppose that the increasing difference between Northern and Southern Italy in the distance between the first union and the first child (see Fig. 15 is largely due to different levels and patterns of female labour market participation in the two areas. But, of course, this interpretation does not take into account the higher risk of marriage among both static and migrant Southerners, especially within the 1.5 generation.

¹⁰⁰ In this regard, in the second chapter it has been shown how employed women in the South are also more likely not to withdraw from the labour market around childbirth.

Tab. 14 Duration of the transition to first child. Cox models. Hazard ratios and significance levels

	First union			First child		
	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V	Model VI
<i>Cohort [ref. 1932-40]</i>						
1941-1949	1,33***	1,26**	1,26**	0,91	0,91	0,86
1950-1958	2,12***	1,98***	2,04***	1,02	0,95	0,94
1959-1967	2,64***	2,39***	2,46***	0,84	0,76	0,72
1968-1975	1,70*	1,58*	1,62*	0,64	0,59*	0,62
<i>Territorial origin and migration history</i>						
<i>[ref. Northerners]</i>						
Generation 1.5	1,22	1,32**	1,27*	1,03	1,01	0,82
Southerners	1,15***	1,30***	1,29***	1,44***	1,50***	1,13*
Migrants	1,43***	1,42***	1,41***	1,03	1,08	0,95
Returned	1,61***	1,68***	1,72***	1,34**	1,32**	0,84
<i>Wife's education [ref.primary]</i>						
Low secondary						0,98
High secondary						1,05
Tertiary						1,11
<i>Wife employed</i>						
Generation 1.5*wife employed						0,59***
Southerners *wife employed						1,24
Migrants*wife employed						1,50***
Returned*wife employed						1,06
Returned*wife employed						1,93**
<i>Class of origin [ref. Bourgeoisie]</i>						
White collar	1,21*	1,16	0,92	0,82	0,88	0,94
Urban petty bourgeoisie	1,12*	1,05	0,86	0,87	0,95	0,97

Agricultural petty bourgeoisie	1,06	0,98	0,75	1,09	1,11	1,15
Urban working class	1,19*	1,12	0,72	0,88	0,92	0,93
Agricultural working class	1,03	1,02	0,75	1,02	1,09	1,08
<i>Educational enrolment</i>	0,40***	0,60***	0,61***	0,90	0,76*	0,88
<i>Education [ref. Elementary]</i>						
Low-secondary	0,87**	0,83***	0,82***	0,97	0,95	0,96
Hi-sec (gender neutral)	0,43***	0,48***	0,43***	0,71**	0,69***	0,69**
Hi-sec (female oriented)	0,78*	0,80*	0,70**	1,08	1,09	1,08
Hi-sec (male oriented)	0,76***	0,73***	0,65***	1,00	0,99	1,00
Univ (female oriented)	0,73***	0,78**	0,65***	1,02	0,97	1,00
Univ (male oriented)	0,96	1,00	0,83	0,94	0,90	0,96
<i>Employment condition [ref. employed]</i>						
Unemployed		0,50***	0,39***	0,94	1,22	1,61*
Out of labour market		0,33***	0,27***	0,96	1,10	1,23
<i>Class [ref. Bourgeoisie]</i>						
White collar			0,92	1,07	1,15	1,34**
Urban petty bourgeoisie			0,86	0,99	1,03	1,20
Agricultural petty bourgeoisie			0,75	0,95	1,19	1,41
Urban working class			0,72***	1,12	1,27*	1,49***
Agricultural working class			0,75	0,83	1,00	1,42
<i>Employment relation [ref. Permanent contract]</i>						
Traditional self-employed		0,95	0,86	1,29	1,35*	1,34*
Atypical contract		0,87	0,85*	1,15	1,03	1,02
Off-the-books		0,80***	0,83**	1,22**	1,22**	1,09
Seasonal		0,75*	0,75*	1,42*	1,34	1,29
<i>Married</i>				169,45***		

<i>Men's age at the first union</i>					0,98**	0,97**
N. subjects	3.261	3.261	3182	3182	2442	2134
N. failures	2.569	2.569	2186	2186	2108	1912
N. observations	546.142	546.142	532.667	618079	88853	71531
Log-likelihood	-13884.42	-13778.18	-13448.14	-9739.61	-9052.93	-7924.55

(***: $p < 0.01$; **: $p < 0.05$; *: $p < 0.1$). Controls for calendar year in all models (linear and quadratic) not shown.

Source: own elaboration based on ILFI (1997-2005)

In Tab. 15 results concerning the transition to the second child are presented.

Tab. 15 **Duration of the transition to the second child. Cox models.**

Hazard ratios and significance levels

	Second child	
	Model I	Model II
<i>Cohort [ref. 1932-40]</i>		
1941-1949	1,00	1,07
1950-1958	0,99	1,01
1959-1967	0,92	0,95
1968-1975	1,11	1,25
<i>Territorial origin and migration history [ref. Northerners]</i>		
Generation 1.5	1,00	0,87
Southerners	2,16***	1,90***
Migrants	1,39***	1,57***
Returned	1,86***	1,41*
<i>Wife's education [ref.primary]</i>		
Low secondary		1,09
High secondary		1,20*
Tertiary		1,07
<i>Wife employed</i>		
Generation 1.5*wife employed		1,11
Southerners *wife employed		1,18
Migrants*wife employed		0,74
Returned*wife employed		1,48
<i>Class of origin [ref. bourgeoisie]</i>		
White collar	0,82	0,90
Urban petty bourgeoisie	1,04	1,06
Agricultural petty bourgeoisie	1,14	1,25
Urban working class	0,92	0,98
Agricultural working class	1,26	1,37**
<i>Educational enrolment</i>		
	1,16	1,20
<i>Education [ref. Elementary]</i>		
Low-secondary	1,08	1,08
Hi-sec (gender neutral)	1,25	1,27
Hi-sec (female oriented)	1,11	1,09
Hi-sec (male oriented)	1,11	1,00

Univ (female oriented)	1,43**	1,34*
Univ (male oriented)	1,22	1,18
<i>Employment condition [ref. employed]</i>		
Unemployed	1,07	1,01
Out of labour market	1,06	1,07
<i>Class [ref. Bourgeoisie]</i>		
White collar	1,02	0,95
Urban petty bourgeoisie	1,15	1,02
Agricultural petty bourgeoisie	0,93	0,81
Urban working class	0,88	0,79
Agricultural working class	0,68*	0,57**
<i>Employment relation [ref. Permanent contract]</i>		
Traditional self-employed	1,02	1,03
Atypical contract	0,97	0,95
Off-the-books	1,20	1,30**
Seasonal	1,39	1,35
<i>Married</i>	3,08***	
<i>Men's age at the first child</i>	0,98**	0,98*
N. subjects	2182	1956
N. failures	1513	1412
N. observations	157604	140164
Log-likelihood	-7535.93	-6933.63

(***: $p < 0.01$; **: $p < 0.05$; *: $p < 0.1$). Controls for calendar year in all models (linear and quadratic) not shown.

Source: own elaboration based on ILFI data (1997-2005)

First of all, in Model I, where for wives' education and employment condition are not controlled for, negative effects of the age at first child on the transition to the second child are found, similarly to other study concerning the Italian case (Rondinelli et al., 2010). More interestingly here, two factors reducing the time to the second child are found: being son of agricultural workers (especially in Model II) and having tertiary education in "female oriented" fields of study. While the first can be easily related to the high fertility rates of rural environments, the second is less straightforward. These results confirm those findings showing that the correlation between educational attainment and fertility completely reverse its sign when we shift from the timing of the first childbirth to the transition to higher-order childbirths, whatever the cause of such a reversal (for the Italian case, it has been traced back to unobserved

heterogeneity in terms of fertility preferences, see Dalla Zuanna and Impicciatore, 2008)¹⁰¹. It is interesting to notice that the positive correlation between education and the time to the second child partly applies to wives' educational attainment too (Model II), although the high collinearity between husbands' and wives' education make coefficients significant only at the 10% level.

Secondly, and most importantly, in Model I North-South differences are now much stronger than in previous models and even among migrants. The latter are still found being significantly slower than Southerners and this could be due to a partial adaptation to the new cultural model. However, once controlling for the dummy variable indicating whether individuals' wives are employed or not, interacted with the typology of geographical mobility (Model II), on the one hand strong differences between Northerners and Southerners with a not employed wife still persist; on the other hand, migrants are no more significantly slower than Southerners¹⁰². It is interesting to notice how women's opportunity-costs are even larger among migrants comparing with Northerners, and especially with Southerners. That could be not only because migrants' wives are employed in a more rewarding labour market, but also because they can not rely anymore on the informal childcare provided by the enlarged family. And we know how informal childcare constitutes almost the only available mean for women's reconciliation between work and family duties in Italy (Reyneri, 2008). It is also remarkable how there are no signals of substantial income effects on the transition to first and second childbirths in Italy, among married couple, as already mentioned in the second chapter. These results support Giraldo et al. (2004), who found that the only variables affecting women's transition to the second child are her age, area of residence and the availability of grandparents, when they claim that the main issue for Italian women's work-family reconciliation is not an income rather than a time problem.

These results are relevant for both the theoretical debate concerning the role of preferences in fertility decisions and the theories linking migrations and fertility. Firstly, preferences seem to matter in order to explain North/South differences in family behaviours. The presented results can be more safely interpreted as being due to different socialization models, as

¹⁰¹ The education effect was not accounted for including in the model whether individuals are employed in the public sector as a possible intervening variable.

¹⁰² Although not making parametric assumptions concerning the shape of the hazard rate, Cox models, as "proportional hazard models", assume the effects of the independent variables to be proportional and constant at all points of the time axis. The best strategy to relax this assumption of Cox models would be to run separate duration models for specific intervals of the time axis, so that we could allow the effects of all independent variables to change over time. But this procedure is of course not parsimonious and it would be difficult to be applied here given the limited number of fertility events in some specific age groups, especially among migrants. So, the proportional hazard assumption has been tested by means of Schoenfeld residuals and the assumption has been found to be violated for men's educational attainment only, as common when studying the transition to parenthood (for the use of Schoenfeld residuals to test the proportional hazard assumption, see Cleves et al., 2004: 200). On the opposite, the effects of geographical dummies have been found to be quite constant over time. Also for this reason, in addition to the very low incidence of childbirths after that threshold in the selected sample, an extension of the observational window after the age of 45 (for instance, until men are 54 years old) did not produce substantial changes in the results.

Northerners and migrants' behaviours have been compared, the latter sharing the same institutional and economic setting. Secondly, coming back to the research hypotheses (Tab. 11), the selection and fast adaptation hypotheses can be rejected, as migrants showed to be faster than Northerners.

As mentioned at the end of par. 3.3.1, the claims about the rejection of the selection hypothesis in favour of the socialization one may be too bold. In this respect, it is important to add here that, differently from international migrations, the mechanisms behind the selectivity of the migration process may be particularly weak in the case of Italian internal migrations. For instance, it is well-known in the literature how the spread of migrants' social networks in the region of destination decreases the migration costs and thus raise the probability to migrate. In other words, as networks expand the migration flow becomes less selective in socioeconomic terms and more representative of the sending society (Fussell and Massey, 2004; Massey et al., 1993). Thus, since in the literature it is well-known that the social networks of Southern migrants in the North are fairly well developed (Arru and Ramella, 2003; Reyneri, 1979), it is reasonable to think that this dynamic worked in a very effective way in the case of Italian internal migrations. It may be useful to recall that between the first half of the '50s and the first half of the '70s the average South-North migration rate was of about 11 inhabitants out of 1000 per year, with about 4.000.000 residential changes within that time span (Panichella, 2011). Not only selection mechanisms may have been rather weak in the context of Italian internal migrations, but they may have mostly worked "against" the socialization effect, due to the already mentioned mechanisms of "anticipated socialization" (Alberoni and Baglioni, 1963)¹⁰³. That being said, although the faster transition to marriage of Generation 1 and 1.5 and the faster transition to the second child of Generation 1 Southern migrants is interpreted as being an effect of socialization to different family values within a "residual explanation" strategy, it may be quite safe to do so, even because it has been shown with the IARD data how socialization differences among young Northerners and Southerners are strong even in recent years.

The results shown are not in contradiction with the presence of disruptional effects in the short run, as migrants were slower than Southerners at the transition to the first child. But considering the transition to the second child, where migration costs are reduced, migrants reproduce the fertility preferences dominant in their childhood environment. Finally, the generation 1.5 of migrants is faster than Northerners only in the transition to the first stable union, therefore we can argue that the adaptation process is already observable. In the international literature it has been found that foreign-born husbands' fertility is especially high when they are

¹⁰³ While migrants in such a period of great internal migrations were typically low-skilled married (or about to marry) men, quite different is the socioeconomic profile of the migrants' pool starting from the second half of the '90s. Indeed, during this new wave of migration flows, selection mechanisms may be much stronger as migrants are mostly constitute by single and highly educated young Southerners (SVIMEZ, 2011). But the latter have a rather limited impact on the analyses presented in this chapter.

married to foreign-born wives (Zung, 2010). This might explain why generation 1.5 of migrants has been found being as fast as generation 1 Southern migrants in the transition to the first union but becoming similar to Northerners in the transition to parenthood, as they have to negotiate their fertility decisions with their Northerner wives. These issues connected with international migrations and mixed marriages will be treated in the next chapter, where they will find some empirical corroboration.

Some Concluding Remarks and Insights From the Impact of Preferences on Fertility Behaviours About the Italian Pattern of Low Fertility and Low Female Labour Market Participation

Coming back to the research questions of this chapter, the analyses suggest that the selection and adaptation hypotheses can not be corroborated, as migrants showed to be faster than Northerners at the transition to the second child. This result can be explained by different socialization models, as important relevant antecedent variables have been controlled for and Northerners and migrants share the same institutional and economic settings. Results are not in contradiction with the presence of disruptional effects in the short run, as migrants were slower than Southerners at the transition to the first child. Finally, the generation 1.5 of migrants is faster than Northerners only in the transition to the first stable union, therefore it is possible to argue that the long term adaptation process is already observable.

The contribution of this paper to the literature and to the main topic of the thesis is twofold. First, although recognizing the importance of the Italian welfare regime in shaping the negative effects of women's labour market participation, the findings suggest that the influence of preferences on family behaviours should not be underestimated. Geographical differences have been used to suggest the need to augment life-history data with value and attitude indicators, especially as far as higher-order childbirths are concerned. Second, the analyses contribute to the literature on the effects of migrations on individuals' life-cycles, supporting an integrated theory combining the main alternative mechanisms suggested in the literature: disruption works short after migration, i.e. at the transition to the first child, socialization influences higher-order childbirths, while adaptation takes place across generations.

Results also confirm how in Italy the timing of the transition to adulthood is strongly related to (men's) economic resources and institutional settings, while preferences could affect both the timing and especially the number of children people desire. But, since the age at each step of the transition to adulthood has negative effects on the subsequent ones, the postponement process influences negatively the likelihood of experiencing additional childbirths independently from individuals' preferences. Therefore, all institutional factors fostering the postponement of the transition to adulthood, as labour market instability due to the "partial and targeted" labour

market flexibilization (Esping-Andersen and Regini, 2000; Barbieri and Scherer, 2009) and the lack of family policies, could create mismatches between individuals' desires and actual behaviour. But, of course, in the first chapter it has been widely argued how economic and institutional factors are not the only cause of the late age at leaving home of Italian youth.

What are the indications of the results of this chapter concerning the main research questions of my thesis, i.e. declining fertility as well as the Italian pattern of low fertility and low female labour market participation? First of all, results shown constitute a first important empirical evidence suggesting how much important values may be in determining fertility behaviours. As in the next chapter values and attitudes which may be related to fertility behaviours will be measured directly and in different points in time, if evidence of declining traditional values is found, the latter can be added an additional cause of the fertility drop in OECD countries. However, as mentioned in the first chapter and in the introduction to this work, Italy has not experienced a huge decline of such traditional values, as it is clearly observable in the low cohabitation rate and the strict connection between marriage and fertility, at least until the last 10 or 15 years. But also the results of the analysis of trends in female labour market participation presented in the previous chapter can be added here, which showed almost no cohort effects, net of educational attainment. If this is consistent with the high Italian fertility rates until '60s, and the persistently low female labour market participation, the problems arise when it comes to an understanding of the pattern of lowest-low fertility rates during the '80s and the first half of the '90s.

A look at the differences in values, institutions and economic circumstances on the one hand and fertility rates on the other hand within Italian regions can be very illuminating, as it represents, on a small case, the same pattern we observe when comparing Mediterranean and Northern European countries. Southern regions have had higher fertility rates than Northern ones until very recent times and in this chapter this evidence has been traced back to different family values. But in the very last years the situation reversed and now in some Northern regions, such as Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy, where also female labour market participation are the highest in Italy, fertility rates are higher than in many other Southern regions.

The reasons behind this reversal can be certainly attributed to those "structural" factors underlined in the first and second chapter. Indeed, not only Northern regions are the most economically advanced regions, where the effects of labour market precariousness are also weaker (Paggiaro et al., 2009; Barbieri and Scherer, 2005), but they also started to implement those policy measures fostering the reconciliation of work and family duties, especially public childcare (Del Boca and Rosina, 2009).

How preferences may play a role in Italy to understand the highest Northern fertility rates? In the same way it has been argued in the first chapter when comparing Italy and Northern European countries. Indeed, while in Southern Italian regions cohabitations and extra-marital

births are still rare events, not surprisingly looking at the results presented here based on the IARD data, in Northern regions these are becoming much more common and socially accepted. Moreover, while a late age at leaving home has always been a typical feature of Northern Italy, in the last years also this trend reversed. And empirical research showed how much social norms are important in determining the “right” age and conditions for leaving parental home (Aassve et al., 2010; Billari and Liefbroer, 2007).

Among norms, those related with religiosity seem to play an important role, very likely as a proxy of the strength of family ties, as it will be argued in the next chapter. The latter will extend the issue of the role of values on female labour market participation and demographic behaviours across time and space and the “paradox” between traditional values and low fertility, which has been mentioned here for the Italian case, will be discussed in an international comparative setting.

Chapter 4: A Theoretical and Empirical Assessment of the Role of Values and Preferences on Family Behaviours in Europe¹⁰⁴

Summary

The aim of this chapter is to understand to what extent values have had important consequences in terms of family behaviours in Europe, especially as far as the rise in female labour market participation and the concomitant drop in fertility rates of the last decades are concerned. Data from three waves of the European Values Study (1990, 2000 and 2008) have been used and the issue of measurement invariance coped with by means of structural equation modeling. It is shown that most of the selected countries experienced a decrease in religiosity and traditional attitudes toward the gender roles and the latter, together with post-materialist values, are significant predictors of many demographic outcomes at the individual level.

Among the value measures, religiosity comes out to be the most important predictor of female labour market participation, new family forms such as cohabitation and marital disruptions and fertility, while gender attitudes only influence female labour market participation and post-materialism the probability of experiencing new family forms, net of the effects of structural variables (e.g., individuals' educational attainment). The correlation between religiosity and fertility has been found to be particularly robust and, in order to support a "causal" interpretation of the religiosity effects, instrumental variable regressions, based on adherence to theological dogmas, and an epidemiological approach have been implemented. The rationale behind the instrumental variable exercise is that religiosity may influence behaviours mainly through a reinforcement of norms by the institutionalized religious community and the strengthening of family ties, rather than through a direct influence of churches' teachings. As far as migrants' are concerned, first generation migrants, as well as second generation in the case of South-America and MENA migrants, in the selected European countries largely hold more "traditional" values and have higher fertility, although finding a native partner has a strong influence on subsequent fertility behaviours.

The decline of traditional values across cohorts and the robust correlation between the former and family behaviours support the idea that ideational shifts, as posited by Inglehart and the Second Demographic Transition, may have had a role in determining recent labour market and demographic trends. However, results also show substantial cross-country differences in values and micro-level correlations between values and behaviours, with more "traditional" countries being the ones with lower female labour market participation and fertility rates and where values matter the most at the micro-level, thus generating an interesting macro-micro paradox. A first interpretation of such a paradox relies on the role of institutional factors, typical of more "modern" and secular countries, fostering a better, and more equal, reconciliation of work and family duties. However, also an additional argument based on the distinction between "strong" and "weak" family ties is discussed. Countries characterized by strong family ties indeed hinder both the mentioned ideational shifts and the diffusion of cohabitations, extra-marital births and an early exit from parental home, thus contributing to low fertility. Some of the presented results may support the latter interpretation: a) there is a large overlap between the cross-country distribution of traditional values and the strength of family ties as reported in the demographic literature; b) the strongest behavioural consequences of religiosity and gender attitudes in Catholic countries is consistent with the idea that the strengthening of family ties may be more relevant than beliefs themselves; c) religiosity has strong and negative effects on new family forms in Central and Southern European countries. The chapter concludes that a systematic theoretical integration of the economic, institutional and cultural dimensions, may be very useful for a better understanding of the European patterns of work and family equilibria.

¹⁰⁴ A version of this chapter has been presented at the *FamIne* Conference "Changing Work-Family Equilibria in Trento" (co-authors Ruud Luijkx and Stefani Scherer), 13-14 October, and it has been presented at the 2012 ECSR/Equalsoc Conference in Stockholm, September 24-26. It will also be submitted for publication in an international journal soon.

Introduction

In the first chapter it has been shown how, to understand the major changes concerning the increasing female labour market participation and low fertility rates in most OECD countries in the last decades, a multilevel “structural” perspective has been developed in the sociological, economic and demographic literature based on the Economic Theory of Family (Becker, 1991) at the micro-level and institutional settings at the macro-level. This perspective has been adopted in the second chapter and has been enriched in the third one, where the first steps toward an assessment of the potential role of preferences in fertility behaviours have been done.

This chapter will go further on enlarging the structural perspective in order to include a cultural dimension in the analysis of familiar behaviours. We have seen in the first chapter how this has been more common in the demographic literature, especially in the stream suggesting the existence of a “Second Demographic Transition” (SDT, van de Kaa 1987; Lesthaeghe and van de Kaa 1986). But we have also seen how the focus on “culture” in the field of quantitative social sciences is growing, as shown by the recent rise of “cultural economics” (Fernández, 2010; Guiso et al., 2006). In this field, culture has been widely adopted as an exogenous variable to explain, among the rest, female labour market participation and fertility behaviours (Fernández and Fogli, 2009; Alesina and Giuliano, 2010)¹⁰⁵.

One of the aims of this chapter is to show the usefulness of integrating standard socioeconomic analyses with value measures, having particular care of the issue of measurement invariance. However, it is not possible here to assess precisely to what extent cultural factors are as important as, or more important than, structural ones. Moreover, the empirical analyses will still consider cultural variables merely as additional explanatory factors, i.e. their effects on family behaviours will be assessed net of the effects of sociodemographic variables.

A first research question addressed in the chapter is whether there is empirical evidence of cultural change, along the selected dimensions, and if the latter might contribute to explain the increase in female labour market participation and the decrease in fertility rates which occurred in the last decades in the European countries selected for the analyses. Such empirical evidence would support the SDT thesis.

However, the need for theoretically grounded interactions between cultural and structural factors for a better understanding of many demographic outcomes, as already mentioned in the first chapter as well as discussing the results of previous analyses, will be assessed both in the theoretical and concluding sections of this chapter. In this respect, the core argument here is that the inclusion of values and attitudes in the explanatory framework does not easily fit with more

¹⁰⁵ I refer to the second section of the first chapter for a discussion concerning how culture is meant by the cited authors and how is treated in this thesis.

structural approaches based on social and family policies and rise additional relevant research questions. For instance, similarly to what has been stated concerning Northern and Southern areas of Italy, countries are expected to differ significantly in terms of their attitudes toward the gender roles and levels of religiosity, which are the main cultural dimensions considered in this chapter, with more “traditional” countries being the ones with lower female labour market participation and higher fertility rates. But it will be shown how Continental and especially Southern European countries are the most gender-unequal and least secularized ones, although it is well-known how those countries experienced very low female labour market participation and fertility rates (Ahn and Mira, 2002). As in the case of the recent reversal of fertility behaviours between Northern and Southern Italian regions, this result would support the idea that the culturally rooted familialistic institutional settings of more traditional countries, e.g. the lack of good quality part-time jobs and childcare provisions for children aged less than three, discourage childbearing decisions of working women who face enormous obstacles in the conciliation of work and family duties.

To complicate further the picture, it also hypothesized, based on the theoretical background and previous empirical evidence in the literature, that values, for example in the case of the religiosity-fertility link, matter the most exactly in highly religious (and Catholic) European countries where fertility is lower. This sort of “macro-micro paradox” asks for a discussion of what kind of social conditions can be responsible for both the strong correlation between values and behaviours at the micro-level and the low fertility rates of some Continental and Southern European countries, allowing for direct effects of the cultural differences on the cross-country distribution of fertility rates, along with the arguments discussed in the first chapter (see especially par. 1.2.4).

Therefore, although the empirical analyses will not to in detail on this, the interpretation of the empirical findings will be enriched with the framework provided by the theoretical distinction between “strong” and “weak” family ties, based on the historical work of Reher (1998), further developed in demography (Dalla Zuanna and Micheli, 2004; Dalla Zuanna, 2001) and cultural economics (Alesina et al., 2010; Giuliano, 2010; Alesina and Giuliano, 2010; Algan and Cahuc, 2005).

4.1 Research Hypotheses

The theoretical and empirical background presented in the first chapter (par 1.1.3) suggests that preferences toward the family domain, proxied by post-materialism, religiosity and gender attitudes, have an independent effect on behaviours without being just the footprints of the latter or a result of institutional settings (Surkyn and Lesthaeghe, 2004). If there is evidence of intergenerational shifts in values and preferences and the latter are correlated with female labour market participation and fertility at the micro-level, it is possible then to add these factors as

additional explanations of trends toward declining fertility in OECD countries. Therefore, the first and second hypotheses of this chapter may be summarized as follows:

H1: in most European countries there has been a shift toward secularization and modern attitudes toward gender roles across cohorts;

H2: at the micro-level, religiosity fosters traditional attitudes toward gender roles and both are strongly correlated with female labour market participation (-) and reproductive behaviour (+) in most European countries, while post-materialism is connected with new family behaviours such as rising singlehood and familiar instability;

As mentioned in the first chapter, if trends of changing values and preferences spread so easily within a society, as we have seen in the case of gender attitudes in the U.S., one might argue why we still observe huge cross-country differences both in values and demographic and labour market behaviours. Moreover, even taking into account such a cultural variation, at a first glance this does not help to understand the very low fertility rates in Southern Europe, although it is consistent with the slow adoption of new family behaviours like cohabitations, extra-marital births and divorce. Indeed, as it will be shown, these countries are the more traditionally oriented in terms of religiosity and gender attitudes (Castles, 2003). This brings to the third and fourth hypotheses of this chapter, which can be summarized as follows:

H3: there is huge variation across countries in value levels and trends, with Central, Eastern and Southern European countries (mainly Catholic) being the more “traditional” ones;

H4: more traditional countries are the ones where values and preferences matter the most at the micro-level, especially as far as religiosity is concerned, although they have lower female labour market participation and fertility rates, thus creating a strong macro-micro paradox.

According to Berman et al. (2007: 7) the “connection between religiosity and fertility is primarily a *Catholic* phenomenon”. To understand this point, once acknowledged the existence of a robust correlation between religiosity and demographic outcomes, it is necessary to assess the mechanisms through which religiosity works. In this respect, religiosity can be conceptualized as an individuals’ characteristic or a contextual variable. According to the first perspective, it is well known how the Church, especially the Catholic one, favours durable marriages and large number of children while strongly discourages contraceptives, abortion and divorce (Philipov and Berghammer, 2007). Therefore, the crucial indicators of the religious experience to understand the correlation between religiosity and fertility would be the ones connected with ideals and beliefs. Apart from Church’s teaching, religiosity may just be a proxy for “traditional” family values, both

at the micro and the macro-level. For instance, Berghammer (2010) found that more religious Austrian women have more children just because they are more likely to follow traditional life paths and gender roles. But once a life trajectory has been chosen – for instance, transition to marriage without previous cohabitation – different indicators of religiosity do not affect reproductive behaviours.

Another important correlate of religiosity refers to social networks and its “institutional” dimension (Goldscheider, 2006). Religious people, especially if regularly attending religious services, are part of a community made of individuals sharing the same values. Being part of a religious community reinforces ties within and between families, so that it is very likely to receive different kinds of support which are positively correlated with fertility, ranging from the emotional sphere to more practical support like fundings and childcare services (Philippov and Berghammer, 2007). As far as childcare support is concerned, Berman et al. (2007) argued that the main reason why fertility declined among Catholics in Western Europe in the last decades is because of the institutional decline of religion and its social services, operationalized in terms of the number of nuns per Catholic in European countries.

Following the authors who relate religiosity and social networks, and based on the theoretical arguments linking strong family ties and low fertility which have been discussed in the first chapter, it is argued that the distinction between “strong” vs. “weak” family systems may be useful to interpret the macro-micro paradox. That is, strong family ties reinforce the behavioural consequences of religion at the micro-level but, at the same time, may be detrimental to fertility at the macro-level.

It has to be recognized that, from a theoretical point of view, one might argue in favour of an opposite argument stating that values should have stronger behavioural consequences in the most secularized and individualized societies. In the latter values may be more influential because, for instance, the minority of highly religious people may differentiate itself substantially from the rest of the society. However, the higher influence of religiosity on demographic behaviours in Catholic countries has already been hypothesized in previous works and empirically corroborated. A work on the rise of cohabitations as a diffusion process by Nazio and Blossfeld (2003) is particularly interesting, for it is explicitly argued how religious beliefs should matter more in the traditional and Catholic Italian environment, comparing with the atheist East Germany. And their empirical models find much stronger negative effects on entry into cohabitation in Italy, although marginally significant in Eastern Germany as well, with Western Germany being somewhat in the middle. However, the mentioned authors do not provide a full argument on why that should be the case, apart mentioning the role of the teaching of the Catholic Church. I shall come back to this point while discussing results and in the concluding section of the paper, when the strength of family ties and the institutionalized dimension of the religious experience will be mentioned as an interpretative key.

4.2 Data and Methods

Trying to assess the pattern of change in values and preferences and its influence on female labour market participation and demographic behaviours across European countries is a hard task. From the methodological point of view, it entails huge problems both in terms of measurement and causality, as discussed in the first chapter. We need data including valid and reliable value measures for several points in time, together with sociodemographic and labour market variables. Then, one would need rich longitudinal data in order to estimate an unbiased causal impact of values on labour market and demographic behaviours. I am not aware of the existence of such a rich dataset, apart from some international surveys on values like the *European Values Study* (EVS), which has been used in this work. Of course, although it collects data on values for several countries across four waves (1980, 1990, 2000 and 2008), its cross-sectional nature implies several limitations for a causal interpretation of the results. Nevertheless, it will be possible to answer, at least partially, to the presented research questions relying on state-of-art techniques for both a correct assessment of the measurement of values and attitudes and the causality issue.

In Tab. 16 hypothesized micro-level correlations are summarized and the main dependent and independent variables included in my analyses are presented, based on three waves of the European Values Study (EVS, 1990, 2000 and 2008)¹⁰⁶. For each social phenomenon, the crucial underlying cultural factor is indicated, but that does not necessarily mean, for instance, that religiosity only influences reproductive behaviours, although it is expected to be most important as a predictor than the other value measures (see par. 1.1.3 in the first chapter).

For what concerns the operationalization of religiosity, the focus of this chapter is on its traditional meaning, therefore indicators related to the dimension of “spiritualism” have not been included. The chosen four items include both (basic) beliefs and behaviours¹⁰⁷:

- a) How important is religion in your life? (ranging from 1, very important, to 4, not at all)
 - b) How important is God in your life? (ranging from 1, not at all, to 10, very important)
 - c) How often do you attend religious services? (ranging from 1, more than once a week, to 8 never)
- Confidence in churches (ranging from 1, a great deal, to 4, none at all).

¹⁰⁶ As mentioned, those correlations are also posited to be stronger in the most traditional Central and Southern European countries.

¹⁰⁷ Variables have been recoded in order that high values mean higher religiosity.

Tab. 16 Hypotheses and variables

Social Phenomena	Cultural explanatory factors	Operationalization	Underlying “structural” processes
Increased female labour market participation	Equalization of gender roles	Attitudes toward gender roles (3 items)	- Increased female educational attainment
Rise in never married individuals, cohabitations and couple dissolution	Rising importance of personal autonomy and the value of self-expression	Inglehart’s Post-materialism index (4 items)	- Increased educational attainment - Increased female labour market participation
Below replacement fertility	Secularization	Religiosity (4 items)	- Increased educational attainment - Increased female labour market participation - Rising economic uncertainty

The wording of the items – ordinal variables ranging from 1 (agree strongly) to 4 (strongly disagree) – used for the measurement of attitude toward gender roles are the following¹⁰⁸:

- a) A working mother can establish just as warm and secure relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.
- b) A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.
- c) A job is alright but what most women really want is a home and children.

These items have been chosen, from a Likert-type scale made of six items, because they are unambiguously related to the latent construct they were meant to measure and may allow to understand to what extent respondents have a vision of the woman as primarily a housewife and a childcarer who does not want (and can not harmlessly) combine work and family, using real situations as a reference¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁸ Variables have been recoded in order that high values mean more traditional gender attitudes.

¹⁰⁹ For example, one might agree that “being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay”, without claiming the male-breadwinner norm for his/her own family. Items like “both partners should contribute to the household income” or “job is the best way for women to be independent” can be strongly influenced by social desirability. Moreover, they do not relate unambiguously to the attitudes toward gender roles: in poorer countries/periods individuals could tend to answer positively regardless of value orientations. Moreover, in Eastern European countries it is common for women to “contribute to the household income”

As far as post-materialism, the original four items Inglehart's index has been used, which classifies people into "materialist", "mixed" and "post-materialist". The items' wording is the following:

If you had to choose among the following things, which are the two that seem the most desirable to you?

- a) Maintaining order in the nation.
- b) Giving people more say in important political decisions.
- c) Fighting rising prices.
- d) Protecting freedom of speech

The measurement of post-materialism is problematic, not only because it has been shown how Inglehart's index suffers from reliability problems (de Graaf et al., 1989), but also because the way Inglehart originally operationalized his concept does not allow to implement the procedure for testing measurement invariance across time and space that is described below¹¹⁰. An alternative 12-items version of the index has been proposed by Inglehart, but it is not available in all the last three waves of the EVS.

To address the research hypotheses of this chapter, value means have to be compared across time (cohorts/waves) and space (17 European countries) as well as regression coefficients when values are used as independent variables. In this kind of comparative works, often very little attention is paid to the meaningfulness of value comparisons, i.e. to the problem of measurement invariance (Horn and McArdle, 1992). In order to compare value means cross-nationally and over-time, three empirical conditions are necessary:

- a) satisfactory fit to the data of a model with the same number of values (latent factors) and the same pattern of zero and non-zero factor loadings across time and space, i.e. *configurational invariance* holds;
- b) factor loadings are all statistically significant, substantial (e.g., standardised values $\geq .4$) and equal across time and space, i.e. *metric invariance* holds;
- c) observed indicators' intercepts can be set as equal, so that the whole differences in means can be expressed at the level of the latent constructs, i.e. *scalar invariance* holds

without the latter being a proxy for "gender equality", but a result of economic strain and the socialist inheritance.

¹¹⁰ This is the reason why trends in post-materialism have not been included in the first hypothesis, while the concept has been used to formulate my second one. Moreover, given the link with economic well-being, in the first chapter it has been argued how post-materialism may have hardly increased within the selected time span (between 1990 and 2008).

The above-mentioned conditions have been tested by means of Multiple-Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis (MGCFA), augmented with observed items' means, implemented in Lisrel.

If the first two conditions are realized, an increase of one unit in the latent factors has the same meaning over groups, i.e. we can conclude that, at least statistically, the meaning of the values is invariant across time and space. Only if respondents in different countries understood in the same way the meaning of a latent construct, it makes sense to compare correlations and regression coefficients. But if the third condition is not realized, then research should not attach too much value to means comparisons across time and space, for mean differences could be the effect of both substantive differences and systematic biases of responses. In this respect, it is possible to rely on "partial measurement invariance" (Byrne et al., 1989), which requires the conditions expressed in the points b) and c) to hold only for two factor loadings or intercepts per latent construct to compare regression coefficients and means respectively across groups (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998).

Once the measurement part of the work has been done, Multiple-Group Structural Equation Modeling (MGSEM) will be applied to analyse the correlation between values and female labour market participation (whether women are housewives or employed) and fertility decisions (the number of children ever had, ranging from 0 to 4 or more) and multinomial logistic regression models to study marital status (married or widowed, cohabiting, separated or divorced and single/never married).

In the last part of the empirical work results of a sensitivity analysis will be shown. Here, an attempt to assess the "causality" of the impact of religiosity on the dependent variables using Instrumental Variable Regressions (IVR) will be carried out. Moreover, an epidemiological strategy will be applied to the 2008 wave where information about migration histories is available. As mentioned in the theoretical section, and already applied in the third chapter, the latter is a very common strategy used in the field of cultural economics (Grunow and Mueller, 2012; Alesina and Giuliano, 2010; Fernandez and Fogli, 2009; Giuliano, 2007).

The reason why sensitivity analyses focus on religiosity, and especially on the religiosity-fertility link, is because this variable is expected to be more important empirically and related not only to reproductive behaviours but to female labour market participation and new family forms as well. Although it is more difficult to argue about a two-way causality between religiosity and fertility or female labour market participation, comparing with the correlation between the latter and gender attitudes, even the former can not be completely ruled out¹¹¹. For instance, once a

¹¹¹ While religiosity has more to do with individuals' identity and it is shaped during socialization, "attitudes" are by definition more likely to be a result of adaptation and more ephemeral as a phenomenon. Fernández et al. (2004) used as a proxy for husbands's gender preferences the information about their mother's work experience, but this information has never been collected within the EVS. I refer to par. 1.2.3 for a discussion concerning the stability of different value measures over individuals' life-cycle.

child is born, even non-believer parents may be willing to conform to the social norm concerning the need for Sacraments (Baptism, catechism, Communion, etc.), therefore they might report an increase in the rate of church attendance. This might be true especially in a country like Italy where such norms are stronger and young people are pushed to “replicate” the parental education received during childhood for their offspring in order not to displease their parents¹¹². Generally speaking, parents may be willing to introduce their children into an institutional environment which constitutes an important source of social relations for both parents and their offspring, thus determining a rising importance of religion in their life and confidence in Church. Shifting on the ideational side, it may be argued that, once having experienced childbirths, parents’ may become more concerned about issues connected with sexual life such as pre-marital sex, abortion and homosexuality, which are strongly determined by religiosity, and modify their beliefs and upbringing style in these domains in a more “traditional” fashion.

In the case of the relation between religiosity and housewifery, according to the rational action theory, the high availability of free-time enjoyed by housewives significantly reduces the opportunity-costs of church attendance (Iannaccone and Everton, 2004). On the ideational side, labour market participation is a fundamental channel toward social participation *tout-court* and the exposition to different (“worldly”) cultural perspectives and life-styles.

What can be done in order to defend empirically a genuine causal relation between religiosity and the discussed outcomes? There is a factor which is not directly implicated in all the mentioned narratives of two-way causality, i.e. the adherence to theological dogmas. It is more difficult to argue that a non-believer parent who increased his/her church attendance rate to conform to a social norm can start believing in the existence of “heaven” or “hell”. This idea is reinforced by the fact that belief in dogmas is not so widespread even among religious people¹¹³. At the same time, changing moral attitudes as a result of beliefs’ adaptation to childbirths might not relate with such dogmas. Moreover, it is debated in the literature if theology is of any importance to assess the effects of “religiosity” on whatever outcome, especially fertility, comparing with alternative explanations based on religion as a proxy for social capital, family ties and other cultural dimensions defining the role of family and gender roles within society, as it has been discussed (Goldscheider, 2006).

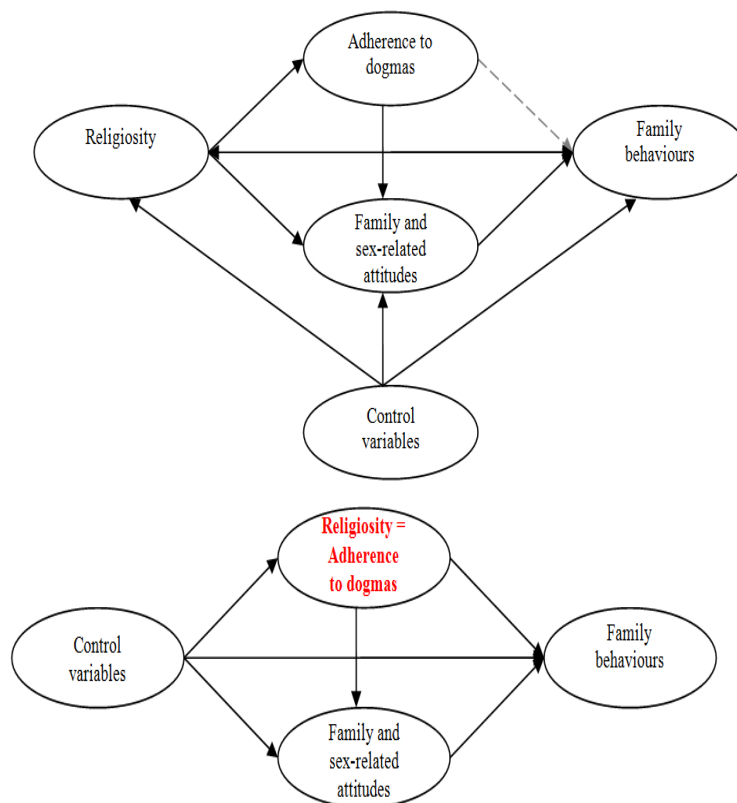
For these reasons, an instrumental variable strategy using adherence to religious dogmas is proposed. The underlying theoretical model is presented in Fig. 16. Net of control variables, “Adherence to dogmas” is assumed not to influence directly – or being influenced by – “Family behaviours”, but only indirectly through a hypothesized influence on beliefs (first image). As “Religiosity” is the natural determinant of believing in theological dogmas, we can use the latter

¹¹² As mentioned in the first chapter, a similar argument has been applied to the slow diffusion of cohabitations in Italy.

¹¹³ For instance, among women in all selected countries aged 40/54 who rates the importance of religion or God in their life more than average, only about 45% believe in hell.

as a source of exogenous variation in religiosity, once controlling for family and sex-related beliefs, as well as other control variables (second image). This strategy will also allow to assess the role of beliefs as a mechanism to explain the effects of religiosity on the analysed behaviours.

Fig. 16 **Dogmas as instruments for religiosity to study family-related behaviours**



An additional test of robustness of the results, which is also substantively relevant, refers to the mentioned epidemiological strategy as an interpretative key. In the 2008 wave of the EVS rich information about respondents' migration and ethnic backgrounds is available, which enables to differentiate migration histories along the main relevant dimensions usually taken into account in the literature. More precisely, the information exploited includes:

- a) parents' area of origin and migrants' age at migration, to distinguish the 1, 1.5 and 2 generation immigrants¹¹⁴;
- b) migrants' area of origin, to distinguish between EU (Southern and Eastern Europe) and non-EU (South America and MENA) migrants;
- c) partners' immigrant status and area of origin, to distinguish whether individuals' partner is a native or a migrant.

¹¹⁴ As in the third chapter, the 1.5 generation is defined as those migrants who migrated at the age of 15 or lower.

Moreover, in the last wave of the EVS information about partners' education and employment condition is available too. The empirical strategy has been to cross the three dimensions about migration histories to build a classification which can be seen as a sort of cultural continuum ranging from the most "modern" (and expected to be the least fertile) pole of natives with a native partner to the most "traditional" (and expected to be the most fertile) one made of 1 generation migrants with a migrant partner, with 2 generation and 1.5 generation migrants being in an intermediate position and ranked accordingly to their area of origin.

4.3 Results

4.3.1 *Measurement of values across time and space*

To ensure at least configurational invariance in the measurement of religiosity and gender attitudes, a preliminary factor analysis within each country-wave among men and women aged 18/54 have brought to the inclusion in the study of the following 17 countries, representative of different areas of (mainly Western and Christian) Europe: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, East-Germany, Finland, France, Great Britain, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and West-Germany. Then the analyses shifted to MGCFA to test metric and scalar invariance across country-waves, using 47 correlation matrices and vectors of standard deviations and means¹¹⁵. In Tab. 17 and 18 are reported the main results of this exercise. Both (full) metric and scalar invariance have to be rejected as all statistics suggest a huge drop in model fit, especially in the case of scalar invariance.

Partial metric and scalar invariance has been achieved setting constraints on at least two factor loadings and two intercepts for each latent variable. The standard procedure relies on the only rule to set free those factor loadings and intercepts with the highest modification indices. But the case of religiosity, as far as partial metric invariance is concerned, is particularly relevant also in substantive terms, as Lisrel diagnostics suggested to "free" those factor loadings concerning attendance to religious services and confidence in churches. These "institutional" variables are much better (reliable) indicators of the religious experience in Catholic countries (especially Poland and Spain), while they are much worse in Protestant ones (especially Denmark, Finland and Sweden). This is a hint of the partially different meaning of religiosity in Northern and Southern Europe, for in the latter the institutional and relational frameworks matter more than the ideational dimension.

¹¹⁵ Matrices should have been 17*3=51, but I had missing information on some variables for Austria, Ireland and Northern Ireland in the 2000 wave and for Sweden in 1990.

As far as scalar invariance, model 3b in Tab. 17 shows how the data is reluctant to accept even a partial scalar invariance, so that six additional intercepts had to be set free to get an acceptable model fit¹¹⁶.

If we look at substantive results in terms of cross-country latent means, what we see is that, still in 2008, there are huge differences in terms of religiosity and gender attitudes¹¹⁷. More importantly, three broad country groups can be identified: Central, Southern and Eastern European (in the majority Catholic) countries as the most traditionally oriented, Western European countries as an intermediate group and Northern countries as the most secularized and gender-equal ones. These clusters largely overlap many standard classifications based on institutional differences in social and family policies and, interestingly, the strong-weak family systems classification apply even better, for it is also able to include the partial “outliers” like Ireland and Finland (Reher, 1998). This suggests how deep is the correlation between institutional settings and people’s preferences and values¹¹⁸. Moreover, while there is a clear negative correlation between female labour market participation rates and country-level traditional value orientations, the correlation is null or even upside down when relating the latter with fertility rates (see Figg. 17 and 18).

Level of invariance	Chi2, df	RMSEA	Δ Chi2 (n-1), Δ df (n-1)	AIC	CFI
.1 Configurational	1631.2, 611	.048	-	3699.2	.99
.2 Metric	4003.0, 841	.072	2371.8***, 230	5611.0	.96
.2b Partial metric	2207.1, 781	.050	575.9***, 170	3935.1	.98
.3 Scalar	11479.8, 1011	.120	9272.7***, 230	12747.8	.88
.3b Partial scalar	5344.8, 905	.083	3137.7***, 124	6824.8	.95
.3c Partial scalar (few exceptions)	4434.5, 899	.074	2227.36***, 118	5926.5	.96

***: $p < 0.01$

Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008)

¹¹⁶ Actually, Chi2 differences between nested models with different degrees of freedom are always huge and significant. However, when sample size is large, it is better to look at different indicators of model fit, like AIC and CFI, to assess measurement invariance (Davidov et al 2008a, 2008b; Meade et al., 2006). In this respect, the partial metric invariance model has an acceptable fit comparing with the baseline model, while the partial scalar invariance model fit (even after adding some exceptions) should be considered just sufficient according to common standards (ratio Chi2/df > 3, RMSEA > .05), showing how difficult obtaining satisfying measurement invariance is in comparative studies and how much the problem is underrated in common research practices (*ibidem*).

¹¹⁷ To understand the results substantively, the reader should keep in mind that the unit of measurement is given by the marker indicators which range from 1 to 4 for both religiosity and gender attitudes. All means are deviations from a reference country-wave group (Belgium-1990).

¹¹⁸ It should be underlined how this heterogeneity is almost completely not explained by compositional differences in terms of sociodemographic factors and educational attainment (results not shown).

Tab. 18 Results from MGCFA (model .3c in Tab. 17)

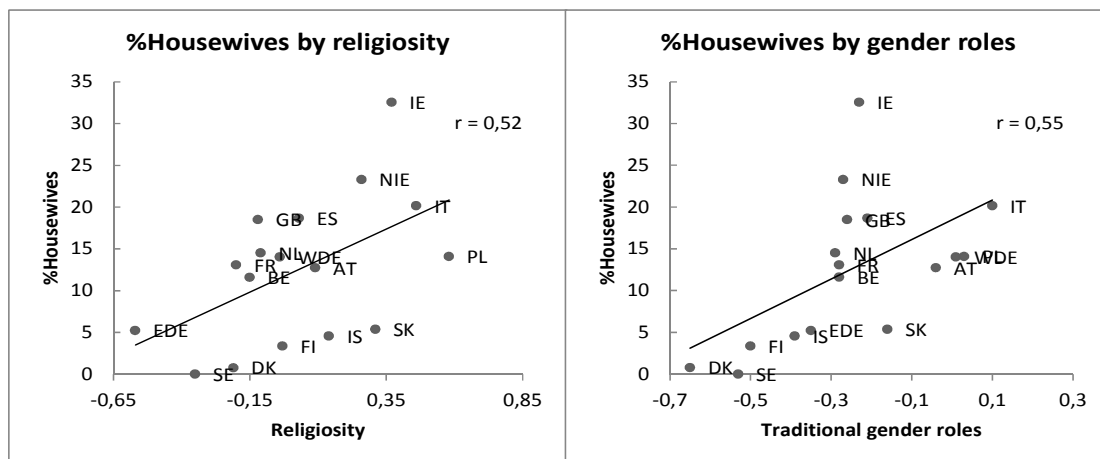
		Factor loadings ^a			
		Religiosity		Gender	
			.79***		
	Importance of religion		(marker)		
	Importance of God		.83***		
	Church attendance		.77***		
	Confidence in Church		.75***		
	Working mother's relation with children			.49***	
				.72***	
	Pre-school child suffers if mother works			(marker)	
	What women really want is home and children			.45***	
		Latent factors means (unstandardised, 2008)			
Sample size (2008)	Ranking	Religiosity	Ranking	Gender	
Austria 827	Poland	.78	Italy	.17	
Belgium 924	Italy	.62	Poland	.05	
Denmark 814	Ireland	.50	W. Germany	.01	
E.Germany 437	Slovakia	.41	Austria	-.07	
Finland 529	N. Ireland	.35	Slovakia	-.27	
France 845	Iceland	.19	Spain	-.37	
G.B. 701	Austria	.12	Ireland	-.40	
Iceland 511	Spain^b	.04	G.B.	-.44	
Ireland 521	Finland ^b	-.04	N. Ireland	-.46	
Italy 770	W. Germany	-.04	Belgium	-.48	
N.Ireland 212	Netherlands	-.14	France	-.49	
Netherlands 664	G.B.	-.17	Netherlands	-.50	
Poland 854	Belgium	-.21	E. Germany	-.61	
Slovakia 632	France	-.27	Iceland	-.67	
Spain 836	Denmark	-.29	Finland	-.87	
Sweden 457	Sweden	-.47	Sweden	-.91	
W.Germany 570	E. Germany	-.77	Denmark	-1.12	

***: $p < 0.01$ ^a Common metric completely standardised solution (country-waves with full metric invariance). ^b Partial scalar invariance does not hold. Catholic countries in bold.

Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008)

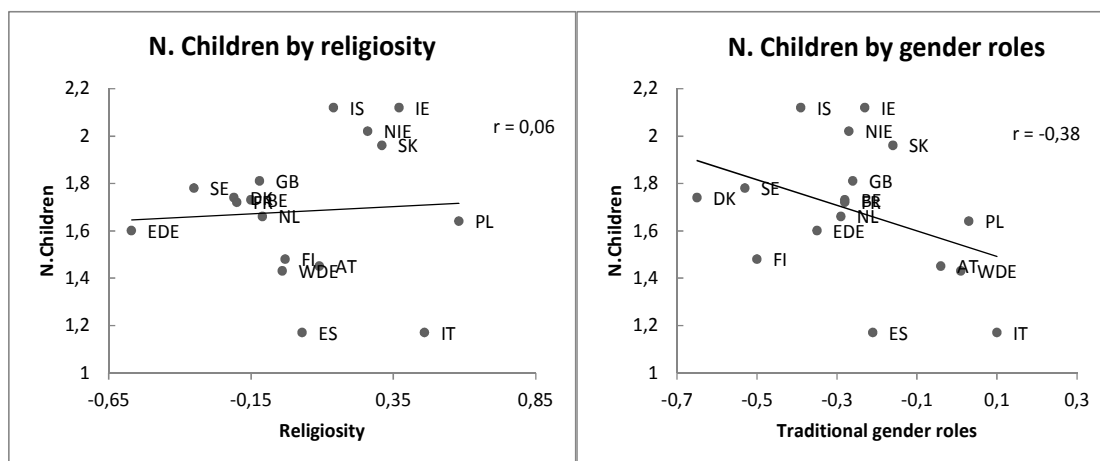
It will be interesting to verify at the micro-level the relation between high religiosity and traditional gender attitudes on the one hand and fertility on the other hand. If this will be strong and significant in all selected countries, than it will be confirmed the macro-micro paradox we hypothesized. But, first, trends in values across cohorts, to test also the claim that changing values are connected with lower fertility, will be described.

Fig. 17 Cross-country correlation between values and female labour market participation (2008)



Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008)

Fig. 18 Cross-country correlation between values and fertility (2008)



Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008)

In order to do this, five ten-year birth cohorts (1932/41, 1942/51, 1952/61, 1962/71 and 1972/81) have been selected. Then, value means across combinations of cohorts and waves are compared, the latter having been conducted approximately every ten years. Although it will be impossible to interpret the results in terms of “cohort” effects, in this way it is possible to eliminate the whole influence of age, which is the best that can be done having only three repeated cross-sections. Value means are computed separately within each country by means of MGCFAs in which groups are made by cohort-waves¹¹⁹. The latter have been selected in order to include in

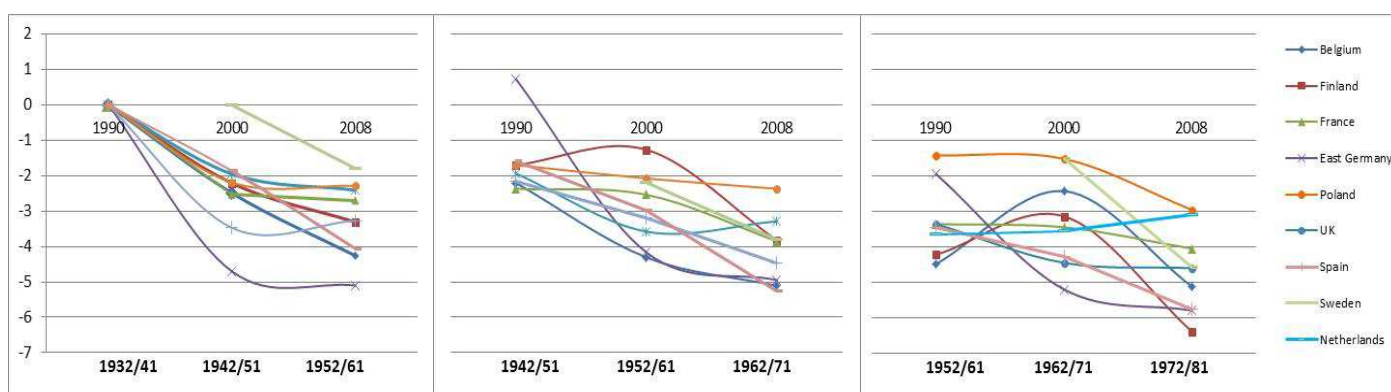
¹¹⁹ In the estimation of value means across cohort-waves the same strategy described in the previous analysis has been applied. For the sake of brevity the whole process for each country is not shown. Suffice it to say that, in the case of longitudinal analyses within countries, full metric and scalar invariance holds with a level of model fit which is always better than the one obtained in the final model of the cross-country analyses (see model 3c in Tab. 17). This confirms the finding of Davidov (2008), concerning the European Social Survey, that measurement invariance is much more easily obtainable across time rather than space.

the analysis individuals within an age group which is more or less the one used in all the following analyses in this chapter. Results of this exercise are summarized in Figg. 19-22.

In Fig. 19 are represented countries for which a strong decrease in religiosity has been detected across the selected cohort-waves¹²⁰. In all the three subgraphs, within which age is kept constant, religiosity means decrease shifting from one cohort to the other, even if most of the decrease occurred between the first two cohorts (1932-1941 and 1942-1951). If we look at the few countries in Fig. 20, we see that within each of the three subgraphs it is impossible to observe a precise religiosity trend¹²¹. This might appear counterintuitive, but, for instance, results concerning Italy suggest that, in the time-span 1961-1998, weekly church attendance declined only by 10% points, shifting from about 50 to about 40% (Pisati, 2000). Moreover, an analysis of the IARD data on youth condition (1983-2004) which has been used in the previous chapter shows that, among young aged 15-24, importance of religion even slightly increased (results not shown).

Fig. 21 suggests that the majority of countries experienced a decline of traditional attitudes toward the gender roles too, which seems to be mainly a result of a shift between the 1990 and 2008 waves, as there are only weak signs of any trend across the selected cohorts within the same wave. Again, there are some few countries for which only weak negative trends have been detected (Fig. 22).

Fig. 19 Countries experiencing decreasing trends in religiosity across cohorts-waves



¹²⁰ The point estimates in all graphs refer to the latent means in the common metric standardised solution and, as in Tab. 18, the first cohort-wave constitutes a reference whose mean is set at 0. Trends have been evaluated “qualitatively” across countries as they come from separated models and can not be formally compared.

¹²¹ Nevertheless, if we look at means across cohorts but within the same wave (for example the cohorts 1932/41, 42/51 and 52/61 in the 1990 wave), so that the trend includes both cohort and age effects, it is possible to identify a negative trend also in Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Slovakia and West-Germany. This could be due to age or period/survey effects.

Fig. 20 Countries experiencing erratic trends in religiosity across cohorts-waves

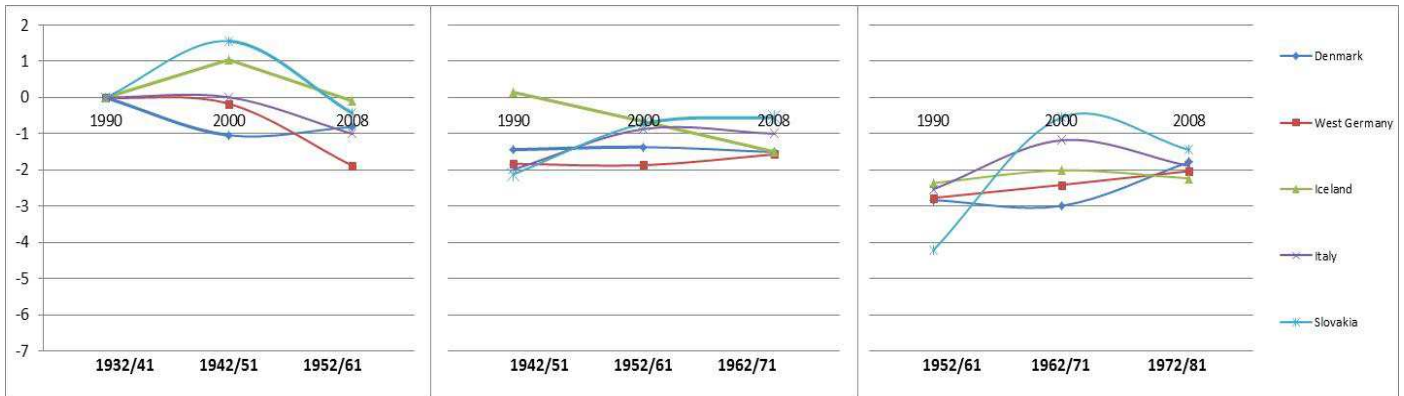


Fig. 21 Countries experiencing decreasing trends in traditional attitudes toward gender roles across cohorts-waves

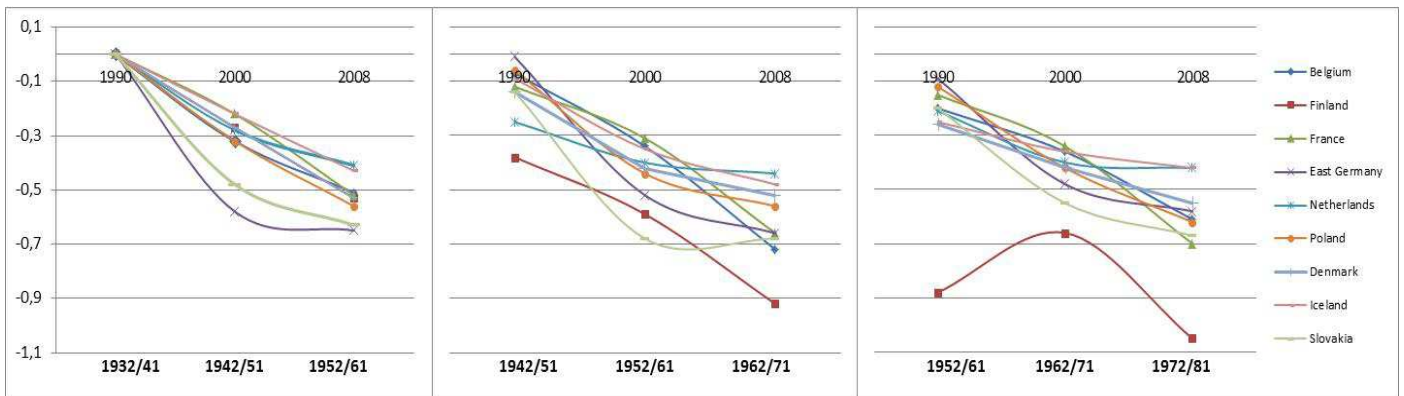
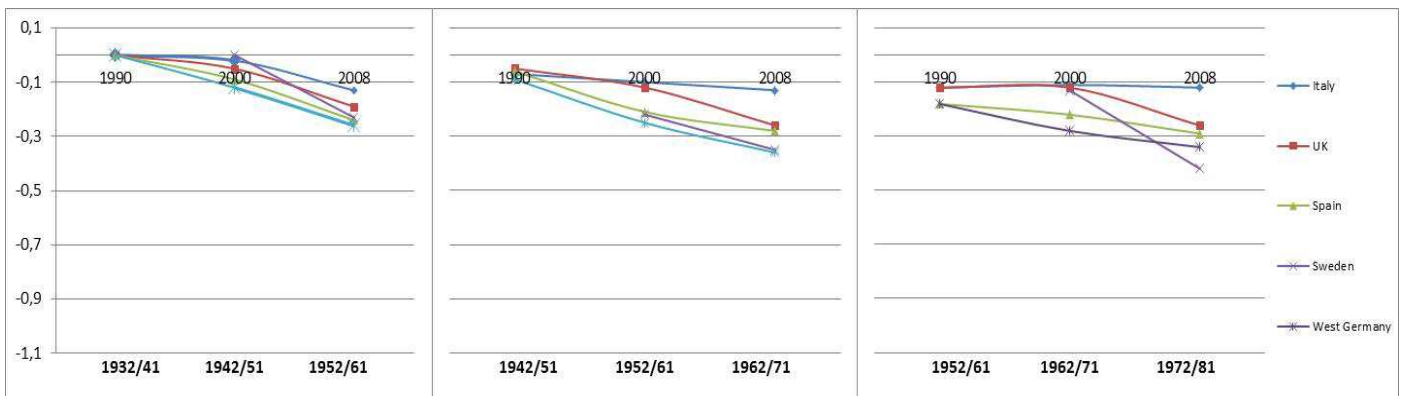


Fig. 22 Countries experiencing weak decreasing trends in traditional attitudes toward gender roles across cohorts-waves



Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008)

Globally speaking, the analysis supports the claims for changing values in Western societies, even if the availability of only three points quite distant in time and the specific age selection makes it difficult to interpret substantially the results and did not allow to analyse long term intergenerational shifts.

Recalling the theoretical debate discussed in the first chapter and the distinction made by different cultural “strata”, it has been mentioned how “preferences”, in an economic fashion, are not stable anthropological features within communities. For instance, according to Fernández (2007), the long term “S-shaped” trend in female labour market participation is a result of a learning process which shows how fast preferences can adopt according to the spread of information and imitation mechanisms. At the beginning few women work and it takes time for individuals to accept the new behaviour and to understand that the costs of working, e.g. the fact that children may suffer if mother works, are much lower than the benefits. Then information spreads through social networks and female labour market participation strongly increases, until new beliefs become widely shared and the pace of the process slows down.

However, although we found signs of a wide process of secularization and “modernization” of gender attitudes in Europe, which started certainly before the selected observational window, there are some important exceptions: Italy, West-Germany, Slovakia and partially Spain, are countries that, in 2008, display relatively high and persistent levels of religiosity and traditional gender attitudes. The results concerning Italy are highly consistent with what has been argued in the second chapter, where it has been noticed virtually nil cohort effects on female labour market participation, once educational attainment and childbearing decisions are controlled for (see Tab. 8).

While Inglehart’ and the SDT’s theses, as well as the economic studies on gender attitudes, stress intergenerational changes in preferences and their consequences in terms of female labour market participation and demographic behaviours, it is suggested here that family systems as part of national cultures may be useful to understand cross-country long-lasting differences. In fact, the latter belong to a deeper, historically-rooted, level of cultural differentiation across countries. Adopting a “spatial diffusion” theory of the SDT (Lesthaeghe and Neels, 2002) and the above mentioned idea that beliefs are transmitted by social networks (Fogli and Veldkamp, 2011), the dense family structures of Continental and especially Southern European countries may have worked as an obstacle in the adaptation to both new value orientations and family behaviours¹²².

At the same time, those dense network structures might reinforce the respect of social norms, thus translating values into behaviours. This issue will be addressed in the following section of the paper, where the correlations between values and female labour market participation and fertility at the individual level will be analysed.

¹²² For an application of a diffusion theory to the spread of cohabitations see Nazio and Blossfeld (2003).

4.3.2 Correlations between values and family behaviours in Europe

Individuals aged 25-54 have been selected to study the correlations between religiosity and gender attitudes with fertility and female labour market participation across the selected countries, implementing MGSEM controlling for exogenous socio-demographic variables¹²³. Results for male subsamples are presented in Tab. 19. The first part of the table confirms that partial metric invariance can be obtained with a modest, although significant, worsening of model fit. Model 3 in Tab. 19 shows that setting equality constraints for all the paths between religiosity, gender attitudes and fertility produces a significant chi2 difference. Therefore, few coefficients with a modification index ≥ 2.5 have been freed to get a non significant worsening of model fit and results based on Model 3b are then shown in the second half of Tab. 19.

In almost all countries religious people tend to have more traditional gender attitudes. While the latter have a very little impact on fertility, most religious people have about .5 children more than the least ones¹²⁴. As predicted, there are some exceptions to this common pattern: religiosity, gender attitudes and fertility are more strongly and positively correlated in the Catholic Spain and Poland, while in Slovakia, Sweden, East-Germany, G.B. and the Netherlands correlations between those variables are much weaker. As a result, the total effect of religiosity on the number of children ever had is non significant in G.B. and East-Germany, while in the Netherlands men with traditional gender attitudes have significantly lower fertility.

Tab. 19 **Correlations between values and fertility (male subsamples) – Lisrel model fit**

<i>Level of invariance</i>	Chi2, df	RMSEA	Δ Chi2 (n-1), Δ df (n-1)	AIC	CFI
.1 Configurational	2009.9, 825	.045	-	3959.9	.97
.2 Metric	2595.5, 895	.052	585.6***, 70	4405.5	.96
.2b Partial metric	2250.3, 883	.047	240.4***, 58	4084.3	.97
.3 Equal endogenous coefficients	2318.5, 925	.046	68.2**, 42	4068.5	.97
.3b Equal endogeneous coefficients (exceptions)	2270.6, 916	.046	20.3, 33	4038.6	.97

***: $p < 0.01$; **: $p < 0.05$

Unstandardised endogenous coefficients based on model 3b^a

Country (sample size)	Religiosity > Gender attitudes	Religiosity > Number of Children ever had	Gender attitudes > Number of Children ever had	Total effect of Religiosity on N.children
Poland (763)	.17	.29	.06	.30

¹²³ Iceland and Northern Ireland have been excluded due to the limited sample sizes and lack of information.

¹²⁴ The units of measure for religiosity and gender attitudes are given by the same variables of Tab. 17, which range from 1 to 4.

Spain (1009)	.25	.15	.19	.20
Austria (488)	.17	.15	.06	.16
Belgium (1239)	.17	.15	.06	.16
Denmark (777)	.17	.15	.06	.16
Finland (370)	.17	.15	.06	.16
France (818)	.17	.15	.06	.16
Ireland (324)	.17	.15	.06	.16
Italy (1104)	.17	.15	.06	.16
W. Germany (759)	.17	.15	.06	.16
Slovakia (790)	.08	.15	.06	.15
Sweden (278)	.01*	.15	.06	.15
Netherlands (723)	.17	.15	-.15	.13
G.B. (582)	.08	.04*	.06	.04*
E. Germany (631)	.17	.02*	.06	.03*

^a Men aged 25/54. Models control for age (linear and quadratic), wave, size of the city of residence, years of education (linear and quadratic) and employment condition (employed/not employed). Stability indices are lower than 1 in all models. * Not statistically significant.

Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008)

In Tab. 20 the exercise is replicated for female subsamples. While model fit and measurement invariance work very much similarly to the case of men, among women there is much more heterogeneity across countries in terms of correlations between endogenous variables: almost half of the coefficients had to be set free in order to get a non significant chi2 difference comparing with the partial metric invariance model. This heterogeneity does not concern the direct effects of gender attitudes on fertility, which are virtually zero in all countries but Spain, thus confirming men's results. Gender attitudes are instead strongly correlated with women's likelihood of being housewife, although very differently across countries. Effects are absent in Scandinavian countries, although the result are not that much perspicuous due to the very limited number of housewives in the samples, and very weak in Poland and Slovakia, for socialist regimes supported female labour market participation regardless of individuals' preferences and, apart from the ideological façade, the quite traditional and patriarchal culture (Davidson et al., 1995). In all other countries effects are strong and significant, especially in Ireland, whose very high fertility and low female labour market participation rates are strongly interrelated, also as a result of the particularly unequal division of domestic work (Voicu et al., 2009).

Tab. 20 Correlations between values and fertility (female subsamples) – Lisrel model fit

Level of invariance	Chi2, df	RMSEA	Δ Chi2 (n-1), Δ df (n-1)	AIC	CFI
.1 Configurational	2342.6, 795	0.047	-	4352.6	.97
.2 Metric	3152.4, 865	0.055	809.8***, 70	5022.4	.96
.2b Partial metric	2567.1, 848	0.048	224.5***, 53	4471.1	.97

.3 Equal endogenous coefficients	2927.5, 932	0.049	360.4***, 84	4663.5	.96
.3b Equal endogeneous coefficients (exceptions)	2594.0, 891	0.047	26.9, 43	4412.0	.97

***: $p < 0.01$

Unstandardised endogenous coefficients based on model 3b^a

Country (sample size)	Religiosity > Gender attitudes	Religiosity > Housewife	Religiosity > Number of children ever had	Gender attitudes > Housewife	Gender attitudes > Number of children ever had	Housewife > Number of children ever had	Total effect of Religiosity on N.children
Netherlands (973)	.18	.03	.24	.19	.04*	.55	.29
Spain (1240)	.34	.08	.16	.16	.21	.31	.27
Italy (1210)	.27	.03	.23	.23	-.14*	.55	.24
West-Germany (931)	.18	.06	.16	.17	.04*	.55	.21
France (1047)	.18	.03	.16	.22	.04*	.71	.21
Belgium (1501)	.18	.04	.16	.13	.04*	.55	.20
Austria (791)	.18	.03	.16	.14	.04*	.55	.19
Poland (898)	.18	.03	.16	.07	.04*	.55	.19
G.B. (837)	.07	-.01*	.16	.17	.04*	.55	.16
Slovakia (996)	.11	-.01*	.16	.05	.04*	.55	.16
Denmark (814)	.12	.01*	.06*	.05	.04*	.55	.07
Ireland (429)	.18	.03	.02*	.26	-.18*	.96	.06
Finland (448)	.18	.03	.01*	.05	.04*	.92	.05
Sweden (271)	.18	-.01*	.01*	.04	.04*	1.20	.01*
East-Germany (776)	.18	-.01*	-.01*	.03*	.04*	.55	.00*

^a Women aged 25/54. Models control for age (linear and quadratic), wave, size of the city of residence and years of education (linear and quadratic). Stability indices are lower than 1 in all models. * Not statistically significant.

Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008)

Also among women religiosity is an important predictor of the number of children ever had. But, although the average effect is pretty similar to the men's case, cross-country differences are much more emphasized. And again, in Scandinavian countries and East-Germany – but also Ireland – there are no significant direct effects, which are very strong in the Netherlands, Italy and Spain. Here, religiosity is also a better predictor of traditional attitudes toward the gender roles and women's probability of being a housewife.

The hypotheses suggesting that religiosity and gender attitudes are important predictors of many demographic outcomes and that these value measures have stronger implications for behaviours in Catholic and more “traditional” countries have been corroborated by the data. In these countries, religiosity emerged as a very important factor shaping both fertility and female labour market participation, although fertility rates are lower than in Scandinavian countries where the selected values have hardly any effect. If the mechanisms behind the role of religiosity were purely linked to individuals' beliefs, one might have expected to find stronger effects exactly in secularized countries, as a matter of selection into religiosity, as already discussed.

Results suggest that maybe it is not a matter of individuals' religiosity *per se*. Only when religious beliefs are supported by institutionalized religious communities they really matter in terms of gender and fertility norms. In secularized contexts, religiosity pertains to an individual sphere, rather than a communitarian one, so that there is no, or very little, social pressure toward the respect of traditional family norms as promoted by religious beliefs. Religiosity as a proxy of networks supporting traditional norms, also through more effective sanctioning of deviant behaviours, could be the clue for a better understanding of the results¹²⁵. This is also confirmed by the higher reliability of behavioural and institutional indicators of religiosity in Catholic countries (see above).

In the already mentioned study about the division of domestic work, it has been argued that Orthodox and Catholic traditions create a “culture of gender inequality”, which goes far beyond individuals' beliefs (Voicu et al., 2009) and can be linked to the nature of family ties, which constitute an important element of national cultures in Catholic and Orthodox countries affecting many demographic behaviours. For instance, as shown in the literature concerning Italy, young people do not leave the parental home to start cohabitating without parental approval, which is clearly understandable also from a rational perspective, as family is the main provider of welfare in Italy (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999). Only when parental attitudes toward cohabitation started to change, in recent years, the diffusion of the new behaviours could start (Di Giulio and Rosina, 2007; Rosina and Fraboni, 2004). A link between religiosity and family ties has been emphasized also by Aassve et al. (2010), who found age norms on leaving home to be strongly influenced by levels of religiosity in the regional and national contexts.

These interpretative issues will be treated again in the concluding section of the chapter. In the next paragraphs, correlations between value measures, including post-materialism, and new family forms will be analysed.

4.3.3 *Family arrangements, religiosity and post-materialism*

In Tab. 21 results concerning the correlations of religiosity, gender attitudes and post-materialism with different types of individuals' marital status at the moment of the interview are presented. Models have been implemented separately for men and women and across two groups

¹²⁵ In the U.S. religiosity has been found to have a positive impact on fertility (Zhang, 2008), but especially among very close Protestant sects as the Old order Anabaptists. That is because, although they are “fully integrated into the economies of their region and take advantage of modern health care, they take considerable care to isolate themselves culturally from their U.S. and Canadian host cultures and live in small, rural communities amid their kin” (Newson and Richerson, forthcoming; Kraybill and Bowman, 2001).

of countries, the “forerunners” of the SDT (Scandinavian countries, France and G.B.) and the “latecomers” (all other countries)¹²⁶.

Even if models include other value measures, post-materialist individuals, as hypothesized, are found to have about 3-6% lower probability of being married across groups¹²⁷, which is mainly driven by a higher probability of having never experienced any kind of stable union. As mentioned, it should be underlined that these effects are almost certainly downsized due to high measurement error, given the rough operationalization in only three categories of a complex concept like the one proposed by Inglehart. While gender attitudes have no direct effects once controlling for employment condition, religiosity is again a very important predictor in all groups and especially among the “latecomers” of the SDT.

As religiosity came out to be the most crucial value measure throughout all the analyses, in the last part of the chapter I shall focus on a sensitivity analysis of the effects of this variable.

Tab. 21 Determinants of marital status^a

		Men			Women		
		Married/ Widowed	Single/Never married	New family forms	Married/ Widowed	Single/Never married	New family forms
<i>Scandinavia, France and G.B.</i>	Mixed ^b	.005	.017	-.022	.012	.017	-.029 **
	Post-materialist	-.029	.048 **	-.019	-.054 **	.057 ***	-.004
	Religiosity ^c	.062 ***	-.038 ***	-.024 ***	.043 ***	-.019 ***	-.024 ***
	Gender attitudes ^c	.004	-.005	.002	-.001	.012 *	-.011
				N=3420, Pseudo-R2=0.153			
				N=3971, Pseudo-R2=0.125			
<i>Other countries</i>	Mixed ^b	-.048 ***	.038 ***	.010	-.023 **	.015 *	.008
	Post-materialist	-.057 ***	.052 ***	.005	-.052 ***	.028 **	.024 **
	Religiosity ^c	.067 ***	-.022 ***	-.045 ***	.052 ***	-.018 ***	-.034 ***
	Gender attitudes ^c	.000	.002	-.002	.000	.004	-.004
				N=7052, Pseudo-R2=0.218			
				N=8830, Pseudo-R2=0.209			

***: $p < 0.01$; **: $p < 0.05$; *: $p < 0.10$ ^a Average marginal effects after multinomial logistic regressions (individuals aged 25/54). Controls for age (linear and quadratic), wave, the size of the city of residence, years of education (linear and quadratic), employment status and social class not shown. ^b Reference category represents “Materialist” individuals. ^c Principal component factors based on the same indicators of Lisrel models.

Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008)

¹²⁶ The country grouping, which was necessary given the few cases of cohabiting, separated and divorced individuals in many countries, is consistent with the actual number of those “new family forms” observed in each country in the EVS data.

¹²⁷ Principal component factor scores for religiosity and gender attitudes have been estimated, using the same indicators as in previous analyses. Running the models without those factor scores does not change much the effect of the post-materialism variable in the first group of countries, while in the second one the negative effect of post-materialism on the probability of being married/widowed decreases by 25 and 20% among men and women respectively. Once controlling for marital status, the effects of post-materialism on fertility are negligible (results not shown).

4.3.4 Sensitivity analysis of the effect of religiosity and IVRs using adherence to dogmas and migrations as interpretative keys

Results from previous Lisrel models concerning the correlation between religiosity and the number of children ever had could be affected by several shortcomings and assumptions:

- a) the number of children variable has been treated as a continuous variable while it is a count variable and its distribution is strongly non-normal as many individuals aged 25-54 have no children at all;
- b) the age selection itself could constitute a problem then, as the *tempo* and *quantum* of fertility are not clearly separated and we are only interested here in the latter¹²⁸;
- c) the effect of religiosity could be c1) non-monotonic, c2) focusing only on having at least one child or having higher-order childbirths and c3) could be driven by a single indicator;
- d) the effect of religiosity has been estimated regardless of marital status, which could constitute a crucial moderator in the relation with fertility, and as a mean effect across waves;
- e) religiosity is assumed to be exogenous with respect to demographic behaviours as well as female labour market participation

Models in Tab. 22 verify what are the consequences of relaxing some of the above-mentioned assumptions (points a), b), c2) and d)) on the effects estimated in Lisrel models, while the causality issue will be treated separately¹²⁹. Only women aged 40-54, distinguishing between those countries for which we found significant (and equal, apart Italy and Spain) direct effects of religiosity and those for which we found none (Denmark, Finland, East-Germany, Ireland, Sweden). The first column shows an OLS model which makes the same assumptions of Lisrel ones, which indeed recovers the same religiosity effects. But when religiosity is interacted with marital status, even in the first group of countries a significant effect among married women is found, while the effect is even negative if women experienced family arrangements such as cohabitation, separation and divorces or if they are single or have never been married at the moment of the interview. Although the main effect remains stronger in the other group of countries, the pattern of interactions is pretty much similar. These results do not change the main finding of a strong correlation between religiosity and fertility, but allow to enlarge these effects to all selected European countries. One of the reason why no effects of religiosity have been

¹²⁸ Of course the age selection was justified by the fact that value effects should be considered within the reproductive age to reduce problems of two-way causality.

¹²⁹ For reasons of space not all the sensitivity checks are reported, but including in the models each indicator of religiosity separately all of them have been found to be correlated with the dependent variable in a roughly monotonic fashion (points c1) and c3)).

found in previous Lisrel models for some countries is related to the higher prevalence of those new family forms in the latter. Moreover, the negative effect of religiosity on fertility if women are not in a traditional marriage underlines the role of social norms shaping the “proper” conditions under which children can be raised.

No significant changes of the religiosity effect, among married women, were found when distinguishing results across waves in the second group of countries so that religiosity came out to be a strong and significant predictor of religiosity in all waves. Maybe due to the limited sample size (about 400 cases in each wave), a nil effect of religiosity in the 2000 wave has been found in the first group of country, to which it is very difficult to give a substantial interpretation. Finally, the model specification has been completely changed recoding the fertility variable in three categories and applying multinomial logistic regressions. Religiosity was found to be negatively correlated with the probability of having only one child and positively with the probability of having more than 2 children, so that the effect of religiosity seems indeed to focus on the quantum of fertility and being proportional along the response surface.

Tab. 22 Religiosity and marital status as determinants of the number of children ever had^a

	Denmark, Finland, E.Germany, Ireland and Sweden			All other countries		
	Lisrel-like model	Relig* Marital status	Relig* Wave ^d	Lisrel-like model	Relig* Marital status	Relig* Wave ^d
Cohabiting ^b	-	-.381 ***	-	-	-.327 ***	-
Separated/divorced	-	-.114	-	-	-.267 ***	-
Never married	-	-1.359 ***	-	-	-1.555 ***	-
Religiosity	.006	.089 ***	-	.130 ***	.146 ***	-
Religiosity* Cohabiting	-	-.210	-	-	.098	-
Religiosity* Separated/divorced	-	-.125 *	-	-	-.119 ***	-
Religiosity* Single/Never married	-	-.367 ***	-	-	-.237 ***	-
Religiosity (1990)	-	-	.116 *	-	-	.138 ***
Religiosity*2000	-	-	-.137	-	-	-.025
Religiosity*2008	-	-	.011	-	-	.059
	N=1713, R2=.154	N=1703, R2=.285	N=1220, R2=.195	N=6029, R2=.139	N=6016, R2=.263	N=4712, R2=.121
	<= 1 child	2 children	> 2 children	<= 1 child	2 children	> 2 children
Religiosity ^c	-.025 **	-.014	.039 ***	-.047 ***	-.005	.053 ***

***: $p < 0.01$; **: $p < 0.05$; *: $p < 0.10$ ^a Coefficients from OLS regressions (women aged 40/54). Controls for age (linear and quadratic), country, wave, the size of the city of residence, years of education (linear and quadratic), employment status and social class not shown. P-values based on robust standard errors. ^b Reference category represents married/widowed women. ^c Average marginal effects after multinomial logit (same controls). Coefficients refer to the main effect (religiosity among married people). ^d Only married women have been selected.

Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008)

This last empirical section of the chapter concludes with an instrumental variable exercise concerning the potential exogeneity of the effect of religiosity on female labour market participation and fertility, adopting the strategy described in the methodological section and based on adherence to theological dogmas. Tab. 23 shows results of such a model implemented among women aged 25-54. As the effect of religiosity on fertility had roughly the same intensity across country in the second group of Tab. 22, analyses rely on this aggregate sample. As far as the correlation with female labour market participation, those countries where a significant (and almost equal) correlation with religiosity has been found in previous Lisrel models have been aggregated¹³⁰.

Starting from the religiosity-participation link, as already known from the MGSEM models, part of the total effect of religiosity on the probability to be a housewife is mediated by the influence of the former on attitudes toward gender roles. What is important for the exercise here is that believing in “heaven” and/or “hell” do not have any direct influence on women’s probability to be a housewife¹³¹. On the other side, as the F-Test of the IV regression shows, adherence to dogmas is strongly correlated with religiosity and the impact of the latter remains substantially unchanged with the two-stage least squares estimation (2SLS). Hansen J-statistics and the endogeneity test for the endogenous regressor corroborate the orthogonality of our instruments and the robustness of the religiosity effect in the OLS estimation.

As far as fertility, the intervenient variable shaped by religiosity does not concern attitudes toward the gender roles, but family and sex-related beliefs like the condemnation of abortion, divorce and homosexuality, which have a significant positive impact on fertility¹³². Nevertheless, the share of the total effect of religiosity captured by these beliefs does not exceed 25%. Factors other than beliefs are then necessary to be considered, as suggested. Hansen J-statistics again corroborates the orthogonality of the instruments and the 2SLS coefficient for the effect of religiosity is now quite larger than the OLS one, although the endogeneity test is only close to the 10% level of significance, so that the difference between the two estimates is not statistically significant.

¹³⁰ This brought to the exclusion of Denmark, East-Germany, G.B., Slovakia and Sweden, countries where housewifery is a very rare event in women’s life, as well as Iceland and Northern Ireland which were not included in Lisrel models.

¹³¹ People who believe in hell have an almost 100% probability of believing in heaven too, while it is not true the opposite. So, a variable distinguishing women believing in heaven, heaven and hell, or neither heaven nor hell has been created.

¹³² The variable “sex-related beliefs” is a principal component factor score drawn from three highly correlated variables ($\alpha=.81$ in the selected sample) concerning the justification of divorce, abortion and homosexuality on a scale from 1 (never justifiable) to 10 (always justifiable), recoded in order that higher values on the factor score mean higher levels of condemnation of those behaviours. Of course religiosity might have an effect on fertility influencing the desire for large families, but the question about fertility intentions is not available for all the last three waves of the EVS. Other questions related to the importance of children in marriage or a dummy variable for women’s need for children in order to be fulfilled have not been used because of too many missing values and little incidence on the effect of religiosity respectively.

Tab. 23 **The effects of religiosity on female labour market participation and fertility^a**

	Flmp (linear probability to be a housewife) ^b						Fertility (number of children ever had) ^c					
	OLS		OLS		2SLS-IV ^d		OLS		OLS		2SLS-IV ^d	
Religiosity	.061	***	.042	***	.048	***	.151	***	.111	***	.169	***
Gender attitudes Sex-related Beliefs ^e	-		.083	***	.082	***	-		-		-	
Heaven ^f	-		.005		-		-		.059	***	.045	**
Heaven&Hell	-		.007		-		-		.016		-	
	N=7333, R2=.140		N=7333, R2=.168		F-Test of excluded instruments: 1382.5		N=3774, R2=.117		N=3774, R2=.120		F-Test of excluded instruments: 562.46	
							Hansen-J (p>Chi2): .98				Hansen-J (p>Chi2): .37	
							Endog-test (p>Chi2): .587				Endog-test (p>Chi2): .176	

***: $p < 0.01$; **: $p < 0.05$; *: $p < 0.10$ ^a Coefficients from OLS and 2SLS IV regressions. Controls for age (linear and quadratic), country, wave, the size of the city of residence, education (linear and quadratic) and employment and social class (in the fertility equations) not shown. P-values based on robust standard errors. ^b Women aged 25-50 (see note 25 for included countries). ^c Women aged 40-54 belonging to the "other countries" group of Tab. 6. ^d All statistics and coefficients from 2SLS IV-regressions are heteroskedasticity-robust. ^e Principal component factor based on 3 indicators (see note 27). ^f Reference category represents women who do not believe neither in heaven nor in hell.

Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008)

Tab. 24 **Migration histories, values and demographic behaviours**

	Religiosity ^a	Gender attitudes ^a	Number of children ever had ^a
Migration type (sample size, first model)			
Natives with EU migrant partner (47)	-.367***	-.071	-.280**
Natives with non-EU migrant partner (38)	.211*	.127	-.212
Gen 2 EU migrant (42)	-.135	.195	-.014
Gen 2 non-EU migrant (32)	.871***	.156	.358**
Gen 1.5 EU migrant (29)	.434***	.279*	-.016
Gen 1.5 non-EU migrant (38)	1.057***	.235*	.636***
Gen 1 with native partner (63)	.582***	.536***	-.056
Gen 1 EU migrant with migrant partner (54)	.747***	.153	.301***
Gen 1 non-EU migrant with migrant partner (99)	1.177***	.795***	.681***
	N=4901, R2=.300	N=4740, R2=.276	N=5205, R2=.194

***: $p < 0.01$; **: $p < 0.05$; *: $p < 0.10$ ^a Coefficients from OLS regressions. Men and women aged 25/54 in a stable union. Models control for sex, age (linear and quadratic), wave, country, size of the city of residence, respondents' and their partners' education and employment condition (interactions with sex included).

Source: own elaboration from EVS (2008)

The empirical work is concluded with a final hint supporting the exogeneity of religiosity and gender attitudes on fertility behaviours adopted in an epidemiological strategy as interpretative key. The information about respondents' and their partners' migration histories and ethnic background, available in the 2008 EVS wave, have been exploited following the strategy described in the methodological section.

Results of this exercise, applied to the whole set of countries selected for previous analyses, can be seen in Tab. 24. Although the analysis should be seen as an explorative attempt, given the limited cases across migrants' groups, results suggest that all the three dimensions used to create the classification have an independent effect. 2 generation migrants are generally more similar to natives in terms of religiosity, especially if coming from Southern and Eastern Europe, while having a native partner is an important "booster" of cultural integration among 1 generation migrants. The pattern concerning gender attitudes is much more uncertain, a clear hint suggesting the higher volatility of "attitudes" comparing with the more culturally-rooted religious identities¹³³. When it comes to the "translation" of this cultural heterogeneity in terms of fertility differences, we discover a significant degree of overlap, with two important peculiarities: fertility is higher mainly among non-EU migrants, even in the 2 generation, while the specific combinations made by a native with a 1 generation non-EU migrant partner (categories in bold in Tab. 24) seem to experience peculiar circumstances fostering lower fertility than expected based on their value orientations. This is interesting for the mechanisms which have hypothesized to produce the correlation between religiosity and demographic behaviours. Indeed, those couples have clearly transcended ethnic boundaries and within group norms favouring endogamy, thus they are "in a position for a social support deficit to affect their fertility" (Fu, 2008)¹³⁴.

Discussion and Alternative Interpretations for the Macro-Micro Paradox Concerning the Role of Values on Demographic Behaviours: Institutional Settings and Family Ties

The empirical analyses corroborated the hypotheses formulated in the first part of the chapter. In most European countries evidence of a process of intergenerational shift in values toward secularization and equalization of the attitudes toward the gender roles has been found. The latter which constitute important dimensions of many theories of social change, although this process seems to be less pronounced in some countries. Nevertheless, as a result of a difference pace of

¹³³ It should be underlined that models already control for women's employment condition (full-time or part-time), but the inclusion of this variable decreases the intensity of only those coefficients which are already significant in Tab. 24.

¹³⁴ When the migration typology has been used as an instrument for religiosity in an IV regression of fertility, the dummy instruments corresponding with those kinds of mixed couples were clearly correlated with the error terms of the equation. A recoded version of the migration typology worked fine in the IV setting and confirmed the positive correlation between religiosity and fertility although the estimate was much larger, as well as the uncertainty around it, than the OLS one given the weak correlation between the instrument and the endogenous regressor.

diffusion of new ideas, in 2008 we still find huge cross-country differences in religiosity and gender attitudes. Since the latter are positively correlated with housewifery and fertility at the micro-level, it is understandable why more traditional countries have lower female labour market participation rates, while it is difficult to assess why fertility rates are lower in the same countries. The pattern of cross-country differences in values is consistent instead with the cross-country diffusion of cohabitations, separations and divorces, for religiosity and “materialism” are negatively correlated with the likelihood of experiencing these family arrangements.

The fertility puzzle is even more tricky given that exactly in more traditional countries such value orientations are better predictors of fertility at the micro-level. As already discussed in several sections of this work, it is possible that features of the family systems prevailing in different countries and supporting traditional social norms might help explaining this finding. First of all, it has been mentioned how important streams of the literature concerned with the religiosity-fertility link stressed the importance of social capital and community support. Religiosity itself has been conceptualized as a system of primary and secondary compensators, the latter being “social” in a sense that such a compensation works within “a relationship when one party to it is empirically unable to provide a reward to the other that the other either expects or desperately wants” (Bainbridge, 2005: 6). This secondary compensation is the fundamental mechanism sustaining a religious community, that is why “Atheism might be most common among people who lack intimate, personal obligations of the kind that might benefit from secondary compensation” (*ibidem*: 7). In this view, religion is mainly a way to fulfill social obligations and the author shows how atheists are less likely to appreciate family reunion and trips, to get married (in favour of cohabitation) and to have large families.

It is suggested that the weakness of social obligations, and the consequential lack of community pressure and support for fertility, is the mechanism underlying the religiosity effect and its cross-country distribution. And there is indeed much micro-level empirical evidence suggesting that strong family ties are positively correlated with fertility (Balbo and Mills, 2011; Alesina and Giuliano, 2010). This mechanism constitutes as well the foundation of the darwinian evolutionary explanation of low fertility which is known as “kin influence hypothesis” (Newson and Richerson, 2009).

But even after having recognized this, there is still the need to explain why countries characterized by strong family ties have lower fertility. Some attempts in this direction have been carried out in the literature and have been mentioned in the first chapter. Generally speaking, the channels through which strong families might foster low fertility at the national level can be both direct and indirect, through their influence on the institutional settings in terms of social and family policies. This is the same argument, both institutional and cultural, which has been applied to interpret the cross-country distribution of values and fertility rates in the study of regional North-South fertility differences in Italy.

Strong family systems, somewhat overlapping with Conservative and “Mediterranean” welfare regimes in the Esping-Andersen’s typology, tend to assign the management of many social risks to the families themselves (Esping-Andersen, 1999). And the “familialism” of the Italian welfare regime has been conceptualized as a product of the strong family ties and their cultural correlates (Dalla Zuanna, 2001). As described by Alesina et al. (2010) and Algan and Cahuc (2006, 2005), welfare institutions have deep cultural roots and the latter might explain why institutional settings, especially the ones related to family, are so difficult to change according to a new socioeconomic environment (Esping-Andersen, 1999). Once established, institutional architectures have an exogenous impact on family behaviours, although it is not clear whether public childcare provisions for children aged less than three and flexible labour market arrangements are as effective on fertility rates as they are on female labour market participation (Del Boca et al., 2009; Gauthier, 2007), and even their influence on the latter has been questioned in a recent review of the literature (Steiber and Haas, 2012). However, it is sure that Scandinavian countries favour the reconciliation of work and family duties far better than Southern European countries (Del Boca and Wetzels, 2007) and it has been claimed that “institutional factors appear to be far more decisive than cultural ones in influencing childbearing behavior” (Andersson, 2011).

But a direct and negative influence of strong family ties on fertility can also be argued, as we have seen. Andersson himself (*ibidem*) suggested that countries where fertility is strongly linked to traditional marriages, which constitute the main policy target rather than individuals as such, might have lower fertility rates because many people might be not willing to embrace a binding family arrangement. This could be the case especially among women as within marriage they are the main provider of housework and childcare. As a matter of fact, we have seen how most of the difference in fertility rates between Scandinavian and Southern European countries concern extra-marital birth rates (Billari and Kohler, 2004). And it has already been mentioned the important role played by family ties in the diffusion of these new family arrangements, recalling evidence concerning the Italian case showing that young do not start cohabiting without parental approval (Di Giulio and Rosina, 2007; Rosina and Fraboni, 2004), although other analyses showed that Italian cohabitants have almost the same degree of visits to parents once distance from parental home is controlled for (Nazio and Saraceno, 2012)¹³⁵.

Italy and Spain, the first European countries reaching the lowest-low fertility rates (Kohler et al., 2002), are recently experiencing a “new demographic spring” (Billari and Dalla Zuanna, 2008; Dalla Zuanna, 2005). In these countries, fertility started to increase after the second half of the ‘90s concomitantly with a huge and sudden increase of extra-marital births and marital instability (Billari, 2008). These findings seem to suggest that the SDT which occurred decades

¹³⁵ In the first chapter it has been mentioned how Hank (2007) found impressive differences across Europe not only in the rate of coresidence of parents with their children, but also regarding the proximity and frequency of contacts between them, being both very high in Italy, Greece and Spain and very low in Nordic countries, with continental ones being in an intermediate position.

ago in Northern countries is now going beyond Alps and Pyrenees, natural borders of the strong family systems, and working as a fertility booster. And if we looked in more detail these recent trends, we would see that the latter entail the more economically advanced regions in Italy and Spain (*ibidem*), where fertility is increasing also as an effect of stronger immigrants' flows. This is interesting because it implies that fertility in Southern European countries might be on the rise under the influence of cultural factors of opposite nature, the traditional family behaviours of immigrants, mainly from non-European (muslim) countries, and modern new family patterns.

Another perspective to stress the direct role of family ties on lower fertility is related to the great attachment to family of origin and the highest value of children, which is reflected by the "latest-late" age at leaving home in Southern European countries (Billari et al., 2001; Dalla Zuanna, 2001). For instance, Dalla Zuanna (2001) argued that Italian parents might have exchanged children's quantity with quality in a period of economic uncertainty, while Giuliano (2010, 2007) showed that 2 generation Southern European migrants in the U.S. exhibit the same pattern of late age at leaving home as their non-migrant counterparts and have significant lower fertility comparing with 2 generation migrants coming from Scandinavian countries.

Of course there is much work to be done before to clarify the role of family systems on fertility behaviours and their interconnections with the institutional and economic dimensions. As argued by Steiber and Haas (2012) concerning women's employment, the only solution to overcome the lack of fit of both "structural" and "cultural" explanations of family behaviours comes from a theoretical assessment of these deep interconnections and a better collection of longitudinal micro-data, enriched with value and preference measures as well as contextual information referred both to individuals' social networks and family ties and the availability of institutional measures aimed at reconciling work and family duties.

Chapter 5: Institutional and Cultural Change Toward the Dual-Earner Model: A Comparison of Italy and the Netherlands

Summary

In this chapter a theoretical framework to analyse the patterns of fertility and work-family reconciliation in Italy and the Netherlands which takes into account both the institutional and cultural aspects outlined in previous chapters is presented. It is shown how both countries were characterised, until the first half of the '80s, by a familialistic welfare state based on the male-breadwinner norm and relatively high levels of fertility and low levels of female labour market participation. In the previous chapters of the thesis micro-level consequences of such a fordist setting in the Italian case have been shown and it has been argued how the persistency of the familialism in the institutional setting and the traditional family values help to explain trends and patterns of female labour market participation and its fertility consequences in the post-fordist period as well.

This chapter presents a theoretical discussion about the different way the Netherlands reacted to the fordist crisis compared with Italy. In fact, the Netherlands have been able to reform their system of labour market and family policies and to foster female employment as well as fertility. Great emphasis is put on the coevolution of preferences, institutions and behaviours, i.e. on the close interrelation between the structural and cultural dimensions both at the micro- and the macro-level. First of all, it is shown how the process of political reform strongly relied on some sociopolitical conditions which allowed to produce universalistic concerns: Dutch policy makers, trade unions and employers renounced to maximize their short-term utility in order to achieve a new institutional setting which has been able to guarantee high labour market flexibility and women's labour market integration. Moreover, it is discussed how the latter outcomes can not be seen as the result of a mere process of institutional engineering, especially as far as the fertility consequences are concerned. In fact, the lack of family policies, at least in terms of public provisions of childcare, constitutes a persistent feature of both the Italian and Dutch institutional settings. The Dutch way toward work-family reconciliation has been the partially unexpected result of the huge part-time inclusion of women in the labour market and gender equality in the domestic sphere, self-reinforcing processes which have been fostered by a wave of cultural change toward more liberal and secular values which started prior to the process of political reform.

By means of the same EVS data and methods already used in the previous chapter, the chapter shows how the Netherlands and Italy differ in terms of religiosity and gender attitudes and how the former experienced a huge decline in traditional values during the '90s, concomitantly with the rise of female labour market participation and fertility. Micro-level analyses confirm how values are strongly correlated with micro-level behaviours and particularly in Italy, where both men's and women's traditional gender attitudes are found to be important obstacles to female labour market participation. Then, at the macro-level, it is confirmed that the persistently traditional gender attitudes may help explaining the high number of Italian women being out of the labour market. However, as part-time employment has shown to be much less structured by values, the limited availability of more flexible labour market arrangements is certainly detrimental to Italian women's labour market participation. At the same time, fertility differences between full-time Dutch and Italian women are null, while the former have much higher fertility if employed part-time or housewives and the differences between the two countries become even larger once considering the heterogeneity in values. Therefore, as argued in the previous chapter, cross-country differences in fertility may be less straightforwardly explained by both the institutional and cultural settings alone.

In light of the results shown, in the concluding section of the chapter it is discussed to what extent the Dutch solution for work-family reconciliation, based on (men's and women's) part-time employment and a higher flexibility of options for childcare, may constitute an interesting alternative to the socialdemocratic one in order to achieve higher gender equality.

Introduction

A comparison of the patterns of fertility and female labour market participation in Italy and the Netherlands has some strategical advantages from a theoretical point of view. Both countries have been included by Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999) in the Conservative model of welfare regime, and they answered to the crisis of the fordist model at the end of the '70s, in terms of social and family policies, according to that belonging¹³⁶. But, starting from the second half of the 1980s, several changes in the institutional setting occurred in the Netherlands. It is argued that these changes might have modified the general equilibrium of the relations between family, work and policies, therefore the belonging of the Netherlands in the threefold Esping-Andersen's welfare regimes' typology. In the meantime, very important changes occurred in the behaviours of Dutch families, concerning female labour market participation and fertility, for both these indicators are now very similar to the ones observed in those countries belonging to the Socialdemocratic model. On the opposite, the Italian Conservative model remained largely untouched both in terms of family policies and labour market regulative systems. In this respect, in the first chapter we have seen how the partial and targeted labour market deregulation has even worsened the trend toward the postponement of the transition to adulthood and the decrease of fertility rates.

The comparison with the Netherlands is therefore very interesting because it allows for an interpretation of the observed patterns of female labour market participation and fertility, as well as the micro- and meso-mechanisms underlying them, in terms of differences in welfare regimes and in a perspective of institutional change. At the same time, the comparison is crucial also with respect to the discussion made in the second part of the theoretical chapter concerning policy design and social preferences. Indeed, the change in the institutional framework across the two countries, and the consequences which followed at the level of individuals' behaviours, may be better understood taking into account differences and evolution in norms and preferences toward the family domain.

¹³⁶ In this chapter both Italy and the Netherlands are referred to as belonging to the Conservative welfare regime, although, consistently with Tab. 1-3 in chapter 1, Italy should have been referred to as belonging to the Mediterranean one. The distinction between a "Conservative" and a "Mediterranean" welfare regime has been used in the theoretical framework because, otherwise, one would have found Italy and the Netherlands in the same classification, while it is argued here that this could be valid only until the '80s, while the Netherlands shifted from a highly familialistic welfare regime to a model much similar to a Socialdemocratic one (see Tab. 27). Moreover, while in Tab. 1 the "Mediterranean" label refers also to some specific features of demographic behaviours in Southern European countries, such as the long stay of the young into the family of origin, in this chapter the original Esping-Andersen's classification based only on the characteristics of the social and family policies is adopted (1990, 1999).

5.1 A Theoretical Framework to Understand the Different Patterns of Fertility and Female Labour Market Participation Between Italy and the Netherlands and Their Evolution

Until the end of the 1970s both Italy and the Netherlands largely relied on the male-breadwinner model and were highly familialistic countries as far as family policies are concerned. Shifting to labour market regulations, they both had an employment-related, insurance-based system of protection from social risks (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999) and used “atypical” forms of social assistance as “proxies” of welfare to cope with the crisis of the fordist model, like early-retirement and invalidity pensions (Hemerijck and Visser, 1997; Esping-Andersen, 1995). This institutional setting and the related macro-, meso- and micro-consequences, based on the theoretical expectations presented in Tabb. 1-3 of the first chapter, are presented in Tab. 25. The outlined micro- and meso-mechanisms have been already tested in the second chapter for the Italian case.

Tab. 25 Welfare Regimes and Work&Family relations from WWII up to the fordist crisis			
Italy and The Netherlands as ideal-types of the conservative welfare regime			
Systems of social integration	Labour market regulative models and family policies	Reaction to the fordist crisis	Gendered division of labour
State > Family	Familialism, principle of subsidiarity	Family main actor to cope with youth unemployment	
State > Labour Market	Insiders' protection (male-breadwinner) and strong employment protection legislation	Early retirement and invalidity pensions as “proxies” of welfare state (strategy of decreasing labour supply)	
Family <> Market	Male-breadwinner model		
			Culturally supported, important role of the religious factor, gendered division of paid and unpaid work
MACRO OUTCOMES	Fertility rates	Female labour market participation	
	Upper-intermediate	The lowest in Europe	
	Family > Work	Work > Family	
MICRO-MECHANISMS	Strong effects of women's educational and economic resources and traditional values on female labour market participation around childbirths	Strong positive effects of men's economic resources on their transition to parenthood, while strong negative effects among women. Strong negative effects of educational enrolment and attainment among women (especially if “hard” fields of study)	

MESO-MECHANISMS	Negative influence of husbands' resources on female labour market participation around childbirths	Strong positive effects of men's resources on their partners' transition to motherhood. For women finding a partner is therefore the strongest predictor.
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But since the second half of the '80s the situation started to change in the Netherlands in both the domains of labour market and family policies. In terms of labour market regulative systems, the Netherlands has gradually shifted toward labour market arrangements pretty similar to the Danish flexicurity model (see the first chapter and note 13). Although the process was rather fast and unpredicted, producing the so called "Dutch miracle" (Visser, 2002; Visser and Hemerijck, 1997), rhetoric apart, the actual Dutch macroeconomic indicators in terms of higher competitiveness and jobs-creation between the 1980s and the 1990s may justify such an excitement, especially if considered relatively to the (Southern) European situation (*ibidem*). Summarizing very roughly, crucial for this transition has been a process of wage moderation, supported – or, at least, tolerated – by unions, as an answer to rising unemployment rates. This allowed to shift economic resources from public expenditures typical of a "passive" welfare state, such as the above-mentioned early retirement and invalidity pensions, which were strongly reduced, to active labour market policies. Secondly, the reforms aimed to increase labour market flexibility, especially focusing on female part-time employment, but at the same time implementing a strong system of income protection¹³⁷. It is a matter of fact that by now the Dutch labour market achieve performances, in terms of low job-tenure and high job-creation, similar to the U.K. and Scandinavian countries (Luijck e Muffels, 2008; Madsen, 2006).

On the opposite, in Italy, both unions and politicians, very often regardless of ideological positions, still defend permanent jobs as the only bulwark for social security, so that the need for labour market flexibilization was satisfied operating at the margins, i.e. burdening young generations with all the costs (Esping-Andersen and Regini, edited by, 2000). The underlying assumption has been that families of origin would have cared for their own offspring. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the way Italy answered to the fordist crisis at the beginning of the '80s and later to the demand for labour market flexibility has been "faithful" to the familialistic nature of its welfare regime (Barbieri, 2002). The latter still influences the definition of the political system's "median voter" that, in Italy, continues to be the (older and older) insider male breadwinner (Ferrera, 1998). Instead of shifting resources from pensions and insurance measures

¹³⁷ The system was built during the '90s and is made up of three pillars: a minimum income for elderly, widows and orphans, earnings-related unemployment benefits and a social minimum guaranteed for all citizens, the first and the last of such measures financed via general taxation. As far as unemployment benefits, in 2007, before the recent economic crisis started, the public expenditure as a percentage of GDP has been .52 in Italy and 1.41 in the Netherlands (see <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx>).

toward universal policies based on citizenship such as unemployment benefits and active labour market policies (Barbieri, 2002; Boeri and Perotti, 2002), new social risks, caused by labour market precariousness and the ageing of the population structure, are internalized in the un-paid family work. In this respect, it has been suggested that those new social risks should be coped with by means of volunteering and third sector (Paci, 2005). The last proposal is particularly surprising in the Italian setting, as it has already been noticed in the first chapter the low level of trust and civicness, which translate into a very limited number of ONGs (Guiso et al., 2008b), contributing to the underdevelopment of Italy and especially of its Southern regions (Tabellini, 2010).

Such a policy indication should be interpreted in light of a society which can not produce universalist concerns and lacks of public-spiritedness, which, it has been argued, it is an important constraint for the design of labour market institutions (Algan and Cahuc, 2005). It is argued here that exactly the lack of trust, and the underlying amoral familism, at the societal level may help to understand the specific institutional path followed by Italy comparing with the Netherlands. But the institutional changes in the domain of family policies still have to be presented, which allow to develop further the connections between culture, institutions and individuals' behaviours.

First of all, it should be said that Italy and the Netherlands have both very limited public childcare for children in the crucial age between zero and two, while much more developed is the Italian public supply for pre-school children older than two (Del Boca and Wetzels, edited by, 2007). In Italy, as in other Southern European countries, the focus has always been on long and economically attractive maternity and, to a lesser extent, parental leaves, which were implemented very early comparing with the Netherlands (*ibidem*, Knijn and Saraceno, 2010). In the latter country, maternity leaves are shorter and parental leaves are not paid at all. However, although there are no formal differences in the incentives for men and women to take the leave, there are virtually no men in parental leaves in Italy, while men take 17% of all days of claimed leaves in the Netherlands (Del Boca and Wetzels, edited by, 2007). If we consider the last pillar of family policies, combining direct and indirect transfers, Italy and the Netherlands rank at the bottom of the European standing (*ibidem*).

So, apart from some hints suggesting higher gender equality in the Netherlands, coming from a higher share of men taking parental leaves, it is difficult to see significant changes in the familialistic family policies in the two countries. But the Dutch pattern of work-family reconciliation measures, as Hofaecker (2003) and Neyer (2003) point out, should be considered from a wider perspective. On the one hand, the Dutch model generally intends to foster female employment based on both partners' part-time employment, in the long run aiming at a more equal distribution of family and work duties among them – as the results toward higher gender

equality in parental leaves start to show¹³⁸. On the other hand, the Netherlands, as in the case of the U.K., are trying to give priority to female labour market participation supported by market-provided care. In this respect, Plantinga et al. (2010) point out that “the involvement of employers in financing childcare has been unique for the Netherlands and it made possible for the Dutch government to realize a large increase in the number of childcare places while avoiding high costs” (2009: 2). If we add that the government compensates part of working parents’ expenses (*ibidem*), it is clear how the three actors of welfare interacted trying to implement a more flexible solution for childcare. For what concerns the Netherlands, the extent to which childcare providers are confronted with market forces is neither detrimental to the employees’ governance nor to the intrinsic motivation of childminders (*ibidem*). On the opposite, the Dutch system seems to be able to reach a higher level of social efficiency through lower deadweight losses (Dobbelsteen et al., 2000).

In sum, as Knijn and Saraceno argue (2010), the Dutch solution aimed at offering couples a greater mix of solutions for work-family reconciliation strategies, following the liberal cultural developments of the 1990s.

The results of these changed institutional patterns and the related macro-, meso- and micro-consequences are presented in Tab. 26 and 27 for Italy and the Netherlands respectively. As far as Italy is concerned, in the second chapter we have seen how, if some changes in the patterns of transition to parenthood and female labour market participation across cohorts may be detected, i.e. the higher women’s labour market participation and declining dependence on men’s economic resources, not only the latter have to be traced back to the increasing financial needs for family formation and compositional differences of women in terms of educational attainment, but also happened at the price of lower fertility.

Tab. 26 Welfare Regimes and Work&Family relations from the second half of the 1980s up to now		
Italy as an example of path-dependency > reactions to increased female labour market participation and flexibility demands according to its belonging to the conservative welfare regime.		
Systems of social integration	Labour market regulative models and family policies	Gendered division of labour
State > Family	Familialism, principle of subsidiarity (few changes)	
State > Labour Market	Partial and targeted labour market deregulation	

¹³⁸ Even if the share of male part-time is the highest among OECD countries (about 17% of the whole labour force in 2010, see <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx>), it should be underlined that, quite obviously following the human capital theory, most of the differences between the Netherlands and other countries are found among both the youngest (15-24) and the oldest (55>) parts of the labour force (*ibidem*). The high rate of part-time employment among young Dutch males can be explained by the increasing trend among them to work part-time during the schooling process (Blásquez Cuesta and Ramos Martin, 2009).

Family <> Market	Persistency of the male breadwinner model	Persistent traditional gendered division of labour with still relevant role of the religious factor (increasing differences across couples according to partners' level of education).
MACRO OUTCOMES	Fertility rates	Female labour market participation
	(Lowest-) Low fertility rates	One of the lowest in Europe
	Family > Work	Work > Family
MICRO-MECHANISMS	Persistent strong effects of social stratification and traditional values on female labour market participation around childbirths	Increasing relevance of men's economic resources on transition to parenthood Persistent gendered pattern of effects of education and economic resources.
MESO-MECHANISMS	Persistent negative influence of husbands' resources on female labour market participation around childbirths (toward independency?)	Persistent strong effects of men's resources on women's transition to motherhood. For women finding a partner is therefore the strongest predictor (toward independency?).

Tab. 27 Welfare Regimes and Work&Family relations from the second half of the 1980s till now		
The Netherlands		
as an example of break of the path-dependency > transition toward a model similar to the socialdemocratic one (part-time, gender equality and market solutions instead of public childcare)		
Systems of social integration	Labour market regulative models and family policies	Gendered division of labour
State > Family	Persistent lack of public services and welfare measures but higher gender equality. More flexible solutions based on market-provided care.	
State > Labour Market	Flexicurity model and part-time diffusion	
Family <> Market	One-and-a-half model (Dual partial-breadwinner model?)	More egalitarian gender culture and more equal distribution of domestic and labour market work.
MACRO OUTCOMES	Fertility rates	Female labour market participation
	Similar to countries with developed family policies.	One of the highest in Europe.
	Family > Work	Work > Family
MICRO-MECHANISMS	Labour market re-entering after childbirths becomes common and so also culturally "accepted": decreasing importance of women's educational and economic resources and traditional values on female labour market participation around	As in Socialdemocratic countries, men's economic and employment resources are less important on their partners' transition to adulthood. Weakening gendered pattern of effects of educational and economic resources.

	childbirths	
MESO-MECHANISMS	Less negative influence of husbands' resources on female participation (positive effects?)	Women less dependent on husbands' resources.

One might consider the evolution of Dutch macro outcomes, in terms of female labour market participation and fertility rates as well as their underlying micro- and meso-mechanisms, as an effect of a process of institutional engineering carried out by the Dutch policy maker in the last three decades. This would mean that the latter has intentionally implemented a flexicurity system, fostered part-time employment and other reconciliation measures which eventually produced the desired results. This interpretation, although very promising for a country like Italy as a model of policy action, is unfortunately complicated by the interaction with a cultural dimension both at the macro- and micro-levels.

First, the process of reforms which generated the Dutch miracle was based on particular socio-political conditions which have shown to be rather difficult to replicate in Italy (Hemerijck and Visser, 1997). It has been recognized how coalition governments in cooperation with social partners have been a key institutional feature which allowed the implementation of wide social reforms in the Netherlands (*ibidem*). According to the Calmfors-Driffil hypothesis (1988), both countries with very low and very high trade unions' coverage, centralization and coordination rates were able to keep under control unemployment and inflation rates during the fordist crisis. That is because coordination among main social actors is crucial to avoid egoistic behaviours, following Olson's theory of collective action (1971). But a feature of the Italian sociocultural setting, as argued in the first chapter, is exactly amoral familism, which seems to prevent from the production of public goods in many respects. For instance, if we look at the pension system, not only Italy is the world leader in terms of public expenditure on pensions but, regardless of the important reforms undertaken in 1992 and 1995, the Italian system still constitutes a real "jungle" of schemes and privileges *ad hoc* for some politically protected categories like professionals and self-employed (Boeri and Perotti, 2002). Once established, it has proven to be very difficult to modify "acquired rights", an argument which can be applied to labour market flexibilization as well, as far as the protection of the insider workers by trade unions against the interests of the non represented young workers is concerned. Or, again, the same logic can be found in the many failed attempts to liberalize professional orders in Italy. In this respect, the role of family ties in the protection of their privileges has been underlined by Pellizzari and Orsini (2012). The lack of public concerns for future generations which is clearly behind the cohort divide in labour market reforms is a typical sign of a system relying on family as the primary source of individuals' well-being and reveals an attitude toward the maximization of individuals' utility "here and now" which is consistent with Banfield's ideal-type of amoral familism.

In the first chapter some works have been mentioned which showed how family cultures played as a crucial independent variable to explain the familialistic features of institutional settings in Southern Europe (Alesina et al., 2010; Algan and Cahuc, 2005; Dalla Zuanna and Micheli, 2004). But the role of family cultures is also relevant at the micro-level, particularly when comparing Italy and the Netherlands. For instance, Knijn and Saraceno (2010) underline the role of a liberal culture which developed in the Netherlands during the '90s as an important environmental condition behind the new conciliation strategies¹³⁹. And when it comes to an evaluation of the reasons behind the diffusion of female part-time employment, the need to disentangle the interactions between changing opportunities and constraints at the macro-level and individuals' preferences becomes crucial. In this respect, Visser (2002) maintained how norms concerning women's role, especially the social approval of working women with children, changed dramatically before the conditions of part-time employment have changed, as a consequence of the declining influence of the Christian parties and rising secularization (Houtman and Mascini, 2002).

It is important to underline how strong the influence of Church and religion was in the Netherlands until the '60s and the peculiar pattern of such influence. Between the '30s and the '60s the Netherlands have been characterized by the so called "pillarization" (*verzuiling*), i.e. the country was highly segmented on the basis of culture (Knippenberg, 1998). The main pillars of the Dutch culture were the Catholic, the Protestant and the Socialist ones. The behavioural consequences of the pillarization are interestingly summarized by Knippenberg: "a Catholic married a Catholic boy or girl, sent his/her children to a Catholic school, listened to the programs of a Catholic broadcasting corporation, read a Catholic newspaper, rented a house from a Catholic housing association, was a member of a Catholic trade union, got Catholic medical attendance, voted for a Catholic political party, and was buried ultimately on a Catholic cemetery by a Catholic undertaker. The same holds true for a (Orthodox) Protestant and, to a lesser extent, for a socialist" (*ibidem*: 211). This is crucial to understand why religiosity had, and still has, such strong consequences in terms of attitudes toward the gender roles and fertility in the Netherlands (Sobotka and Adigüzel, 2002), also supporting the empirical results and theoretical intuitions of the previous chapter.

What happened with the rise of educational levels and geographical mobility during the '60s is that the closure of the communities defined by the belonging to one of the dominant cultural pillars rapidly eroded, the so called process of "de-pillarization" (*ontzuiling*). This is interesting also with respect to the distinction made in the first chapter between different levels of cultural embeddedness of family behaviours. In the Netherlands the sociocultural changes

¹³⁹ As mentioned, the individualization behind the conciliation measures developed in the Netherlands concern the higher flexibility of choice between public and private childcare provisions, the possibility to shift to part-time for both partners and regardless of the socioeconomic position as well as the extension of equal rights of married couples and children to heterosexual and homosexual partnerships and children born out of wedlock (*ibidem*).

depicted by Inglehart and the SDT, driven by increasing educational levels, were not obstructed by historically-rooted differences in family cultures. The high influence of religion in the Netherlands was more an effect of the political organization of the Dutch society rather than being an anthropological feature.

A way to look empirically at this phenomenon has been to study the declining religious assortative mating as a proxy for secularization. Hendrickx et al. (1991) found strong cultural barriers for marriages across denominational groups in the period 1938-1958, concomitantly with the pillarization period. On the contrary, starting from the '60s they recorded a sharp fall of in-marriage rates among Catholic and Orthodox Protestants, which means that religiosity stopped to be a crucial factor determining individuals' identities¹⁴⁰.

Therefore, it is possible to argue that, before the changes in the institutional framework, individuals' exposure to different beliefs caused a strong and sudden process of cultural relativization which supported women's changed behavioural patterns. The latter have been certainly reinforced by the diffusion of good quality part-time jobs, which have been made available by the policy change.

In addition to the temporal antecedence of value comparing with institutional changes, Groot and Pott-Buter (1993) tried to disentangle the effects of women's market and reservation wages to explain the rise of female labour market participation in the period 1979-1987, controlling for women's education and their partners' wage. Results suggest that the main explanatory factor behind increasing participation is a decline of reservation wages, suggesting for the dominant role of a change in preferences toward housewifery. Once in the labour market, the part-time integration of women further contributed to a change in mentality among young Dutch generations, which does not pertain only to men's more equal gender attitudes. For instance, Wielers and Raven (2011) showed how female part-time employment deeply modified Dutch younger generations' attitudes toward work: "whereas the breadwinner household was organised around the man's work, in the dual-earner household work and family life had to be adjusted to each other...[and]...work norms were adjusted downward. Workers do not want the complete subordination of family life to work demands" (*ibidem*). This process was reinforced by the diffusion of part-time work that reduced the support of "work obligation norm, ..., the extent to which people perceive paid work as a social obligation to the members of their society" (*ibidem*).

¹⁴⁰ It is interesting to notice how outmarriage rates have been more widespread among Catholics, who also record lower levels of church attendance. This might explain why the demographic consequences of religiosity in the Netherlands mostly entail the Protestant "Bible belt" (Sobotka and Adigüzel, 2002).

5.2 Assessing the Role of Values and Preferences in Italy and the Netherlands

In order to test the hypotheses about changes in macro-outcomes and meso- and micro-mechanisms across periods in Italy and the Netherlands one would need Dutch longitudinal data of the kind used in the second chapter for the Italian case. Moreover, in order to assess to what extent values may have played a role in the Dutch exiting from the male-breadwinner equilibrium, these data would also need to be augmented with value measures like the ones used in the previous chapter. As I do not have at my disposal such a dataset, especially in the Dutch case, the same EVS data and methods already used in the previous chapter will be adopted, with a focus on Italy and the Netherlands. More precisely, the analyses will address to what extent value changes may have influenced the different trends in fertility and female labour market participation in the two countries, so that research hypotheses can be summarized as follows:

- a) first of all, it will be tested if there is any evidence of a pattern of values change toward secularization and modern gender attitudes stronger in the Netherlands than in Italy;
- b) second, following Tab. 26 and 27, at the micro-level the impact of religiosity and gender attitudes on fertility and female labour market participation is posited to be stronger in Italy, especially as far as husbands' traditional gender attitudes on their wives' participation decisions are concerned;
- c) third, in the Netherlands education is expected to be a more important booster of modern attitudes toward the gender roles than in Italy

Finally, but this is something we already know from the previous chapter, if the selected values have a strong and robust impact on the behaviours of interest in both countries, it makes sense to assess to what extent differences in values between Italy and the Netherlands may explain different levels of female labour market participation and fertility. As far as the former are concerned, a last hypothesis is the following:

- d) persistent men's and women's traditional values, and their micro-level relevance in the Italian setting, could explain the higher number of Italian women being out of the labour market comparing with their Dutch counterparts.

However, part-time employment is expected to be much less influenced by values, so that in the concluding section of the chapter the discussion will focus on which policy suggestions can be derived for the Italian setting. At the same time, it will be discussed how fertility differences

between Italy and the Netherlands are much less straightforwardly explained by both institutional and cultural differences, the latter meant in terms of religiosity and gender attitudes.

5.2.1 *Measurement of values in Italy and the Netherlands across genders and waves*

In Tab. 28 and 29 results of a measurement exercise using the same data, variables and methods of the previous chapter are presented, so that the empirical evidence will be discussed only substantively. The first table shows that nested models for metric and scalar invariance, although far from suggesting full measurement invariance between Italy and the Netherlands, give some hints in favour of the use of the already known indicators (see previous chapter and Tab. 29) to compare raw latent value means and their correlations with sociodemographic and labour market variables.

<i>Level of invariance</i>	Chi2, df	RMSEA	Δ Chi2 (n-1), Δ df (n-1)	AIC	CFI
.1 Configurational	415.2, 156	0.051	-	943.2	.99
.2 Metric	786.3, 211	0.065	371.1, 55	1204.3	.98
.2b <i>Partial metric</i>	602.9, 206	0.055	187.7, 50	1030.9	.98
.3 Scalar	1159.2, 261	0.073	556.3, 55	1477.2	.96
.3b <i>Partial scalar</i>	930.8, 256	0.064	327.9, 50	1258.8	.97

Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008).

As shown in Tab. 29, all standardised factor loadings are higher than .40, therefore sufficiently reliable¹⁴¹. First substantive results in the second half of Tab. 29 show that the Netherlands is significantly less religious than Italy in all the waves, especially in the male subsamples. In both countries there are no signs of secularization going on between 1990 and 2008, so that most of the process of secularization in the Netherlands happened before 1990 (see Knippenberg, 1998). Cross-country differences in terms of attitudes toward the gender roles were not as strong as in the case of religiosity in 1990, at least among men, but there has been a huge increase in modern gender attitudes in the Netherlands between 1990 and 2000¹⁴², which parallels the huge increase in female employment rate in that period in the 25-54 age group (from 52 to 70% according to the OECD, <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx>, while in Italy the same figures were 47 and 51% respectively). Interestingly, the increase in modern gender attitudes concerns to the same extent Dutch women and men. On the opposite, among both Italian men and women we can

¹⁴¹ All factor loadings are common across groups apart from 5 which have been set free given very high modification indices, see the difference between Model 2a and Model 2b in Tab. 28

¹⁴² To understand the results substantively, the reader should keep in mind that the unit of measurement is given by the marker indicators which range from 1 to 4 for both religiosity and gender attitudes.

observe only a very slight increase of modern attitudes toward the gender roles, regardless of an increase of female employment rate in the 25-54 age group from 47 to 59% between 1990 and 2009. This is consistent with the results and the arguments provided in previous chapters: increasing female labour market participation in Italy is due mainly to increasing educational attainment. This implies that the latter has had only a very limited influence on Italian women's (and men's) gender attitudes, as stated in the hypothesis c).

Tab. 29 Common metric completely standardised solution (model .3b in Tab. 28)				
Factor loadings				
			<i>Religiosity</i>	<i>Gender</i>
Importance of religion			.84 (marker)	
Importance of God			.85***	
Church attendance			.77***	
Confidence in Church			.75***	
Working mother's relation with children				.49***
Pre-school child suffers with working mother				.71 (marker)
Ok job, but women really want home and children				.53***
Latent factors means (unstandardised)				
		Sample size	<i>Religiosity</i>	<i>Gender</i>
<i>Italy</i>	Men (1990)	782	0 (ref.)	0 (ref.)
	Men (2000)	767	.17***	.06*
	Men (2009)	556	.06	-.05*
	Women (1990)	911	.35***	-.05
	Women (2000)	878	.43***	.00
	Women (2009)	633	.41***	-.14***
<i>Netherlands</i>	Men (1990)	372	-.59***	-.08*
	Men (2000)	450	-.54***	-.37***
	Men (2008)	607	-.62***	-.48***
	Women (1990)	504	-.45***	-.39***
	Women (2000)	486	-.47***	-.74***
	Women (2008)	752	-.40***	-.69***

Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008).

5.2.2 Values and micro-level behaviours in Italy and the Netherlands

In order for these differences in levels and trends of values to be relevant to explain macro-differences in terms of female labour market participation and fertility in Italy and the Netherlands, it is necessary to evaluate to what extent religiosity and gender attitudes correlate with micro-level behaviours. In this respect, Tab. 30-32 show the correlations between the value measures and female labour market participation, marital status and the number of children ever had by Italian and Dutch respondents.

As already known from previous chapter, in both countries traditional gender attitudes and religiosity are strongly and positively correlated with women's probability of being a housewife and negatively correlated with their likelihood of being employed in a full-time position and about a third of the positive effect of religiosity on the probability to be a housewife is filtered by gender attitudes. Part-time employment seems to be less influenced by values in both countries, which is interesting from a policy perspective, as it will be discussed. Average marginal effects (Model II in Tab. 30) show that, given the range of the principal component factor scores in the selected samples, most religious women have about 13 and 16% higher probability of being a housewife in the Netherlands and Italy respectively (apart from the indirect effect through gender attitudes), while the same figures reach about 50% in both countries for most traditionally oriented women.

Tab. 30 **Determinants of female labour market participation^a**

		Italy						Netherlands					
		Full-time/Self employed		Part-time	Housewife		Full-time/Self employed		Part-time	Housewife			
<i>Model I</i>	Religiosity	Dy/dx	***	dy/dx	dy/dx	***	Dy/dx	***	dy/dx	Dy/dx	***		
		-0.085	***	-0.012	0.084	***	-0.075	***	0.006	0.061	***		
		N=1111, Pseudo-R2=11.35						N=846, Pseudo-R2=9.96					
<i>Model II</i>	Religiosity	-0.059	***	-0.001	0.051	***	-0.065	***	0.017	0.041	***		
	Gender attitudes	-0.085	***	-0.035	***	0.105	***	-0.049	***	-0.051	***	0.096	***
		N=1111, Pseudo-R2=13.61						N=846, Pseudo-R2=12.24					

^a Average marginal effects after multinomial logistic regressions (women aged 25/50). Results for the category "student/retired/other" not shown. Controls for age (linear and quadratic), wave, the size of the city of residence and years of education (linear and quadratic), included as relevant antecedent variables, not shown.

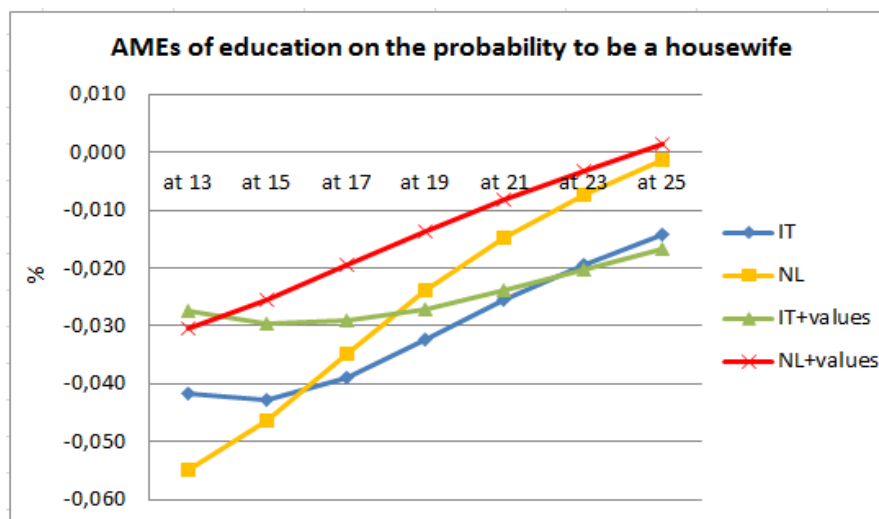
Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008)

In addition to the direct effects on female labour market participation, values might also constitute important intervenient variables explaining, at least partially, the correlation between women's educational attainment and their participation decisions. As mentioned, Italian women's labour market participation is posited to be strongly structured by their educational career (see Tab. 26), in accordance with the results of the second chapter, the effect of the latter being only weakly captured by religiosity and gender attitudes.

Fig. 23, showing average marginal effects from the same model of Tab. 30, confirms both the hypotheses. In fact, female labour market participation is more structured by education in the Italian case, especially as far as tertiary education is concerned. Regardless of the non-linear effect of education, starting from the age of 19 to the age of 25, each additional year of stay in the educational system has persistent, significant and substantial negative effects on the probability to be a housewife in Italy, while the effect is close to 0 in the Dutch case after 21 years old. Moreover, in the same range of educational attainment, the indirect effect of education, passing through values, is stronger in the Dutch case: almost 50% of the point estimates of the marginal

effects of education at the ages 19-23 is “captured” by religiosity and gender attitudes in the Netherlands, comparing with almost none in Italy.

Fig. 23 **The total and direct effects of educational attainment on the probability to be a housewife among Italian and Dutch women**



Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008). Based on models presented in Tab. 30.

Going forward toward the next steps of the life cycle¹⁴³, Tabb. 31 and 32 show the correlation between values and family formation, net of the indirect effects mediated by employment status. In the case of marital status, the main result is that gender attitudes do not matter in this respect in both Italy and the Netherlands and across male and female subsample once employment status is controlled for, confirming results of previous chapter. However, more traditionally oriented Dutch men are significantly more likely to be single. This result might be understood with the difficulties those men face in getting a female partner which share the same view concerning gender roles in a highly gender-equalized setting. In this respect, in the previous chapter traditionally oriented Dutch men were found to have lower fertility too. This clearly recalls that by now an important part of the story has been ignored, i.e. the effects of men’s values and attitudes on their female partners’ labour market and demographic behaviours. This issue will be addressed later in this chapter using the 4th wave of the EVS which contains partners’ information. As far as religiosity, the latter has very strong and significant effects on the probability of being or having been married common across genders and countries, confirming previous results on the topic. Most religious individuals have between 16-24 percentage points higher probability of being married according to the specific subsample of Tab. 31, and are less likely to have experienced cohabitations, separations and divorces.

¹⁴³ All models assume a “causal” path education > occupation > family formation > fertility which is of course only useful for descriptive reasons.

Tab. 31 **Determinants of marital status^a**

		Men			Women		
		Married/ Widowed	Single/Never married	New family forms	Married/ Widowed	Single/Never married	New family forms
<i>Italy</i>	Gender attitudes	0.010	-0.005	-0.005	-0.011	0.013	-0.002
	Religiosity	0.053 ***	-0.033 ***	-0.020 ***	0.050 ***	-0.025 **	-0.025 ***
N=1123, Pseudo-R2=.337				N=1243, Pseudo-R2=.256			
<i>Netherlands</i>	Gender attitudes	-0.014	0.031 **	-0.017	-0.006	0.012	-0.006
	Religiosity	0.073 ***	-0.043 **	-0.030 **	0.057 ***	-0.027 **	-0.030 **
N=747, Pseudo-R2=.190				N=972, Pseudo-R2=.218			

^a Average marginal effects after multinomial logistic regressions (women aged 25/54). Controls for age (linear and quadratic), wave, the size of the city of residence, years of education (linear and quadratic), included as relevant antecedent variables, not shown. Models also control for employment status (among women) and social class (among men).

Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008)

The last dependent variable is the number of children ever had by respondents. Tab. 32 shows OLS estimates across the selected subsamples. A clear indication explaining why fertility has been so increasingly different in Italy and the Netherlands comes from the labour market variable in women subsamples: while part-time employment is little developed and does not help Italian women conciliating work and family duties, Dutch women have significantly higher fertility levels if employed part-time instead of full-time.

But a much trickier finding, in light of the conciliation debate and preference theories, is to understand the large difference in fertility levels of housewives in the Netherlands comparing with Italy, but it might be that Dutch women employed full-time constitute a selected group with a much stronger career orientation. It is interesting to notice, again, how important is religiosity as a predictor of fertility. More religious men and women in Italy and the Netherlands are much more likely to reach higher-order parities and the effects are much stronger among women. As found in the previous chapter, the positive effect of religiosity only applies if individuals are in a stable union. In the case of Italian women, religiosity seems to be the most important predictor of fertility after marital status. Gender attitudes show to be only weakly correlated even with fertility once employment status is controlled for, apart from a significant positive effect of traditional attitudes toward gender roles among married Italian men. This result is interesting and should be interpreted parallel to the positive effect of traditional gender attitudes on the probability to be never married among Dutch men: while in an increasingly gender-equalized setting traditionally oriented men are “crowded out” from the marriage market, in a much more gender-unequal one more traditional men might be able to find a female partner accepting a carer role or to influence their partners’ behaviours. These results are clear hints suggesting the necessity to collect data to analyse the influence of assortative mating with respect to values and attitudes on female labour market participation and demographic behaviours as well as the joint evolution of values and

attitudes within households along the family cycle and across different institutional and cultural contexts.

If only women aged 40-54 are selected, in order to analyse completed fertility, the effect of religiosity slightly increases both in Italy and the Netherlands and the interaction term with marital status disappears in the latter. One should maybe not attach to much value to this result due to the limited sample sizes, but, given that the interaction term is even stronger in Italy with a similar number of women left single at those ages, these findings might be interpreted as a result of a more strict adherence, in Italy, to the norm “forbidding” having children out of a stable union. All other relevant coefficients remain more or less the same, apart from the direct effect of education among Italian women, which is no more negative, but even positive at the highest levels of educational attainment, showing that the educational effect is mainly connected with postponement.

Tab. 32 **Determinants of the number of children ever had^a**

	Italy						Netherlands					
	Men		Women		Women 40-54yo		Men		Women		Women 40-54yo	
Married/Widowed (ref. cat.)	-		-		-		-		-		-	
Never married	-1.069	***	-1.070	***	-1.532	***	-1.397	***	-1.032	***	-1.318	***
New forms	-0.486	***	-0.257	**	-0.282	**	-0.491	***	-0.091		-0.144	
<i>Gender attitudes</i>	<i>0.077</i>	<i>**</i>	<i>-0.034</i>		<i>-</i>		<i>-0.010</i>		<i>-0.022</i>		<i>-</i>	
<i>Gender attitudes*</i>												
<i>Never married</i>	<i>-0.124</i>	<i>***</i>	<i>0.000</i>		<i>-</i>		<i>-0.064</i>		<i>0.012</i>		<i>-</i>	
<i>Gender attitudes*</i>												
<i>New forms</i>	<i>0.027</i>		<i>0.032</i>		<i>-</i>		<i>0.059</i>		<i>0.081</i>		<i>-</i>	
<i>Religiosity</i>	<i>0.131</i>	<i>***</i>	<i>0.192</i>	<i>***</i>	<i>0.225</i>	<i>***</i>	<i>0.120</i>	<i>**</i>	<i>0.200</i>	<i>***</i>	<i>0.244</i>	<i>***</i>
<i>Religiosity*</i>												
<i>Never married</i>	<i>-0.148</i>	<i>***</i>	<i>-0.203</i>	<i>***</i>	<i>-0.295</i>	<i>***</i>	<i>-0.150</i>	<i>**</i>	<i>-0.218</i>	<i>***</i>	<i>-0.124</i>	
<i>Religiosity*</i>												
<i>New forms</i>	<i>0.070</i>		<i>-0.097</i>		<i>-0.150</i>		<i>-0.088</i>		<i>0.064</i>		<i>0.123</i>	
Full-time/Self (ref. cat.)	-		-		-		-		-		-	
Part-time	-		0.099		0.141		-		0.603	***	0.500	***
Housewife	-		0.345	***	0.292	***	-		0.815	***	0.577	***
Other	-		0.082		0.155		-		0.182		0.203	
Service class (ref. cat.)	-		-		-		-		-		-	
Never worked/missing	-0.020		-		-		0.046		-		-	
Intermediate	-0.056		-		-		-0.072		-		-	
Supervisors	-0.032		-		-		-0.013		-		-	
Lower sales	-0.022		-		-		-0.205	*	-		-	
Skilled manuals	-0.115		-		-		-0.122		-		-	
Unskilled manuals	-0.022		-		-		-0.376	**	-		-	
Eduyrs	-0.032	***	-0.016	**	-0.005		-0.011		-0.008		-0.008	
Eduyrs2	0.002	*	0.001		0.004	***	-0.001		-0.002		0.001	
	N=1082, R2=.553		N=1206, R2=.502		N=633, R2=.324		N=746, R2=.507		N=971, R2=.424		N=505, R2=.311	

^a Coefficients from OLS regressions (individuals aged 25/54). Controls for age (linear and quadratic), wave, the size of the city of residence, years of education (linear and quadratic), included as relevant antecedent variables, not shown. P-values based on robust standard errors.

Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008)

The analysis of the micro-level correlations between values, female labour market participation and fertility among Italian and Dutch women is ended up with a Lisrel model summarizing all the main findings. Results are shown in Tab. 33¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴⁴ Women in a stable union aged 25-54 have been selected, controlling for the type of family arrangement (variable "new fam" in Tab. 33), in order to take into account the interaction between religiosity and marital status and the categorical nature of the latter. For the same reason, labour market status is included with a dummy variable indicating whether women are housewives. All other variables are defined as in previous models. For the sake of brevity, the results at each step of the procedure are not shown. The analysis first

Tab. 33 **Direct effects of education and values on labour market participation and family outcomes^a**

	Italy						Netherlands					
	Edu	Relig	Gender	House	New fam	N childr	Edu	Relig	Gender	House	New fam	N childr
Edu	-	-.10	-.22	-.20	.06	-.07	-	-.10	-.38	.00	.00	.00
Relig	-	-	.38	.06	-.12	.19	-	-	.23	.06	-.12	.19
Gender	-	-	-	.41	.00	.00	-	-	-	.27	.00	.00
House	-	-	-	-	-.09	.13	-	-	-	-	-.09	.20
New fam	-	-	-	-	-	-.11	-	-	-	-	-	-.11

N=926 (Italy), 792 (Netherlands). Chi2=336.38, df=154

RMSEA=.037 (90% C.I.=.032÷0.043), CFI=.97

^a Common metric completely standardised structural coefficients (women in a stable union aged 25/54). Controls for age (linear and quadratic), wave and the size of the city of residence not shown. All coefficients different from zero are significant at the 5% level. Partial metric invariance of religiosity and gender attitudes holds across countries. In bold coefficients significantly different across countries. Standardised residuals are normally distributed and no large modification indices are left. Stability indices are lower than .4 in both countries.

Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008)

Lisrel models confirm the main hypotheses that:

- a) religiosity has direct effects on all the dependent variables, being the most crucial variable, while gender attitudes only influence female labour market participation. The (unstandardised) total effect of religiosity on the number of children is quite huge: according to Lisrel estimates, most religious women in the selected samples have, on average, about 1 child more than the least religious ones;
- b) the main cross-country difference concerns the effects of education, which has significant direct effects among Italian women on all analysed behaviours and especially labour market participation. Although gender equality *per se* matters more in Italy, and is much strongly influenced by religiosity, high educational attainment has a much higher “gender-equalizing” effect in the Netherlands.

Before to assess to what extent country-level differences in female labour market participation and fertility rates may be shaped by the different national patterns of values, the issue of men’s gender attitudes on their partners’ employment condition will be treated. Following the instrumental variable strategy based on adherence to theological dogmas, the same results of the previous chapter suggesting a genuine “causal” effect of religiosity on female labour market participation and fertility have been found (results not shown here). As in previous chapter, we are

started testing the configurational invariance model with all parameters set free across samples. Then measurement invariance has been tested and partial metric invariance corroborated. Finally, equality constraints on beta coefficients of the structural models have been imposed, setting free those with the highest modification indices. Results in Tab. 33 refer to this last step.

left with the issue of the “causal” impact of gender attitudes on women’s participation. Of course here the issue is particularly difficult to be addressed because, while religiosity has more to do with individuals’ identity and it is shaped during socialization, “attitudes” are by definition more likely to be a result of adaptation and more ephemeral as a phenomenon. Fernández et al. (2002) used as a proxy for husbands’ gender preferences the information about their mother’s work experience, but this information has never been collected within the EVS.

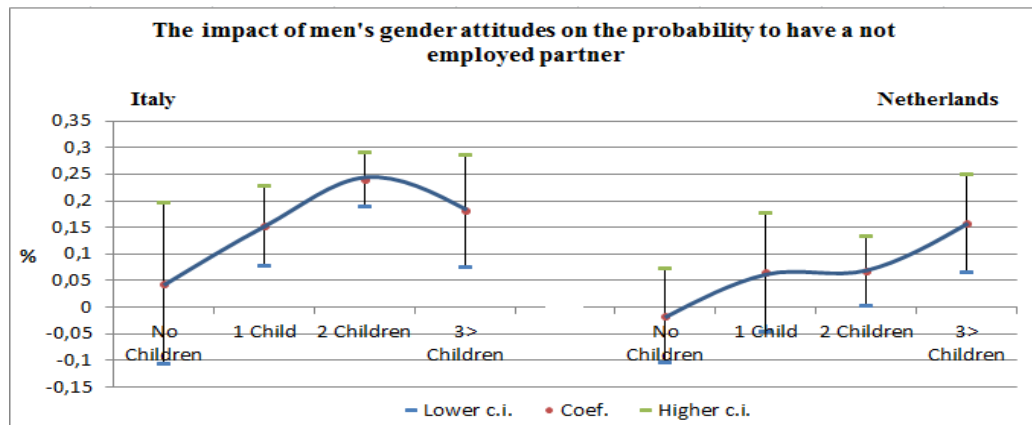
However, it has been noticed the potential importance of men’s gender attitudes as a factor shaping women’s behaviours. Exploiting the information about partners’ education and employment condition in the 2008 survey, men’s attitudes toward gender roles are related to their partners’ labour market participation, net of the educational attainment of both partners and husbands’ social class. According to the results shown above – i.e. that Italian “traditional” married men have higher fertility while Dutch men are more likely to be never married – these effects are posited to be stronger in Italy (hypothesis b)). At the same time, the exercise might work as a test for a genuine impact of gender attitudes on female labour market participation.

It has been known in the literature how the birth of the child in the household tend to foster the reproduction of the gendered division of domestic work after the beginning of a partnership, especially in gender-unequal countries (the end of the so called “honeymoon effect”, see Schulz and Blossfeld, 2006). Therefore, the impact of men’s gender attitudes on their partners’ employment condition is expected to be stronger the more childbirths a couple experienced, especially in Italy. After all, the latent construct for gender attitudes refers to a vision of the woman as primarily a housewife and a childcarer who does not want (and should not) to combine work and family. Therefore, it is reasonable that, if a couple has no or few children, “traditional” men, in the sense described above, have little interest in keeping their wives at home.

These theoretical expectations brought to a model including a three-way interaction between men’s gender attitudes, the number of children ever had and the country of residence to study female partners’ employment condition. Fig. 25 shows the results of such a model applied to a pooled sample of Italy and the Netherlands in the 2008 EVS wave¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴⁵ Given the very limited sample size (526 cases with valid information concerning partners and gender attitudes), cases having a wife working part-time or full-time could not be distinguished, although this would have been an important issue. For the same reason, the dependent variable is whether men have a not employed partner, rather than simply a “housewife”. However, this may substantively correct in this model as many Italian women, in absence of partners’ help, labour market arrangements and policy measures to combine work and family duties, tend to retire after the first childbirth. Results do not change if the focus is on housewives only.

Fig. 24 The impact of men's gender attitudes on their partners' employment condition, by the number of children ever had, in Italy and the Netherlands



Source: own elaboration from EVS (2008). Average marginal effects (and 90% confidence intervals) after logistic regression (526 men in a stable union aged 25/64). Controls for age (linear and quadratic), both partners' education and men's social class, included as relevant antecedent variables, not shown.

Although the limited sample size produces a great deal of uncertainty, results confirm those theoretical expectations preserving a weak statistical significance. Indeed, if we look at the marginal effect of men's attitudes when the couple has two children, this is significantly stronger in Italy, both substantively and statistically, thus confirming the hypothesis that traditional men's gender attitudes matter more in the Italian setting. Moreover, in both countries the pattern of effects is as such that at higher number of children in the household corresponds a stronger impact of men's gender attitudes – marginally significant if we compare the childless couple with the household with two or three children in Italy and the Netherlands respectively – and this is the case especially in Italy.

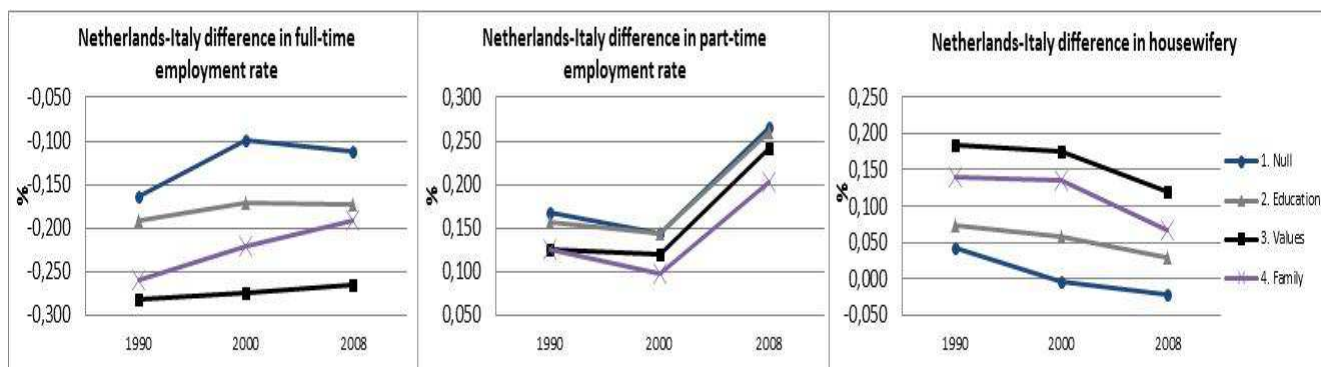
Of course, this exercise can not be seen as a definite attempt to solve the causality issue. Men's gender attitudes might mirror, at least partially, their partners' ones, according to the degree of cultural homogeneity within couples. Moreover, men's gender orientation itself might be the result of an adaptation to women's decision.

5.2.3 The potential impact of values on macro-level differences in trends and patterns of female labour market participation and fertility in Italy and the Netherlands

The last empirical section of the thesis shows the impact that value differences at the country level might have to understand macro differences between Italy and the Netherlands. Starting from female employment patterns and trends, the blue line in Fig. 25 shows uncontrolled Netherlands-Italy differences across EVS waves, which are very limited in terms of housewifery, while the lack of full-time positions in the Netherlands is compensated by the prevalence of part-time

positions¹⁴⁶. While in 1990 employment rates were the same across countries, in 2008 the Dutch one is about 15 percentage points higher. Controlling for education does not affect differences in part-time employment rates while it reduces both the level and pace of increase of full-time positions in the Netherlands (grey lines). Adding values (religiosity and gender attitudes) in the model causes an additional decrease and increase of 12 percentage points in the differences between Italy and the Netherlands in the rates of full-time employment and housewifery respectively (black lines). But, again, differences in part-time employment change only slightly. On the opposite, if we control for marriage and fertility rates (violet lines), the negative difference in full-time employment rates reduces as well as the positive one in part-time employment, as a result of higher marriage and fertility rates in the Netherlands and the overrepresentation of part-time workers among Dutch married couples with children.

Fig. 25 Disentangling female labour market participation differences between Italy and the Netherlands

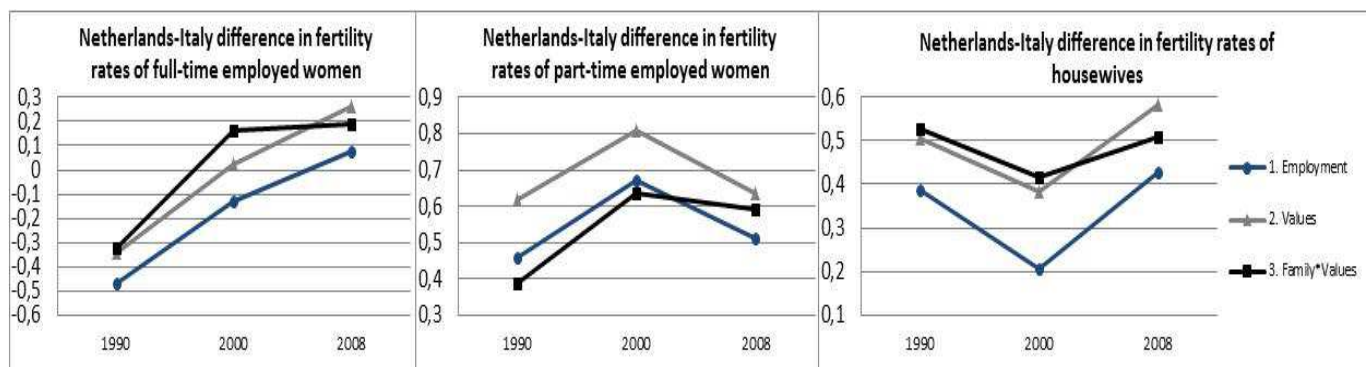


Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008). Average marginal effects after stepwise multinomial logistic regressions (1915 women aged 25/50). Results for the category “student/retired/other” not shown. Models include the necessary interaction effects according to previous models. In the full model, 95% confidence intervals are, on average, about $\pm 6\%$ for each point estimate. Pseudo-R² of the full model is 0,223.

In Fig. 26 the same exercise is repeated using the number of children ever had as the dependent variable.

¹⁴⁶ Although this is obviously not the best data source to study labour market indicators, OECD’s estimates of female employment rates in the selected age group and years are very precisely estimated by the EVS as far as the Netherlands are concerned. This does not hold for Italy as in 1990 and 2009 there is an overrepresentation of employed women of about 5%, reaching 14% in 2000.

Fig. 26 Disentangling fertility differences between Italy and the Netherlands



Source: own elaboration from EVS (1990, 2000 and 2008). Linear predictions after OLS regressions (2177 women aged 25/54). Models include the necessary interaction effects according to previous models. In the full-model, 95% confidence intervals (based on robust standard errors) are, on average, about $\pm 0,250$ for each point estimate. R2 of the full model is 0,477.

Apart from the 1990 survey, fertility of full-time employed women does not matter that much to explain the higher fertility rate in the Netherlands (blue lines). On the opposite both Dutch part-time employed and housewives have much higher fertility rates comparing with their Italian counterparts. In all cases, controlling for values (i.e. for religiosity, as gender attitudes do not matter here), all Dutch women, regardless of their employment condition, come out to have much higher fertility rates (grey lines). In the case of part-time employment, controlling for marital status strongly reduces the difference in fertility between the Netherlands and Italy, but this is not true anymore in 2008, showing that part-time for Dutch women is becoming less and less connected with marriage.

Discussion of the Role of Values on Female Labour Market Participation and Fertility in Italy and the Netherlands and Some Policy Suggestions

Results of Fig. 26 suggest that gender attitudes may matter a lot in determining aggregate labour market outcomes, at least as far as the exit from housewifery is concerned. Results of the second chapter showed how in Italy female labour market participation mainly increased as an effect of rising educational attainment, while cohort effects, potentially capturing increasing women's career orientations, were not significant (Scherer and Reyneri, 2008). In the last two chapters it has been shown how the increase in educational attainment among Italian women did not contribute to change deeply the traditional gender attitudes common among Italian couples, while in the Netherlands we observe a much stricter positive correlation between education and modern gender attitudes (see Fig. 24). And, in this respect, the analysis of Fig. 26 does not take into account men's gender attitudes, which have been shown to be of great relevance in influencing employment decisions of married women with children, especially in Italy (see Fig. 25). So, this chapter adds additional empirical evidence suggesting that the persistent rate of women being out

of the labour market even before the birth of a child could be explained, at least partially, by widespread traditional gender attitudes in the Italian setting.

At the same time, results suggest that part-time employment may be an optimal solution to ease the reconciliation of work and family duties and increase female labour market participation in Italy, as this labour market option is much less structured by values and preferences as it is the choice between housewifery vs. full-time employment. That could be especially the case in a country where many women still tend to think that staying at home when children are little is more desirable than relying on private or public childcare. And recent empirical results show how strongly traditional family cultures are connected with preferences for informal childcare (Jappens and Van Bavel, 2011).

At the end of the first chapter it has been mentioned the role of part-time *vis-a-vis* other conciliation measures such as high levels of public provisions of childcare. The “standard” Socialdemocratic solution to rise both female labour market participation and fertility has been the “commodification” of women childcare, with women massively entering the public sector of the labour force (Esping-Andersen, 1999, 1990). While it is certainly true that the lack of childcare is one of the causes of women’s labour market withdrawals around first childbirth in Italy, the former may rise several issues of gender equality, given the high rate of horizontal segregation found in Nordic countries (Gornick and Jacobs, 1998) which translates in a higher pay-gap (Mandel and Semyonov, 2005). Moreover, such a solution tends to underrate not only cultural differences across countries, but also different women’s preferences between work and family orientation within countries¹⁴⁷. Two important implications can be derived from these arguments:

a) it is unlikely that a single measure, such as public provisions of childcare, can obtain “optimal” solutions in all the contexts and for all individuals;

b) it is not true that women should necessarily “masculinise” their work-career to reach the gender-equality equilibrium (Esping-Andersen, 2009). That is not just because of the different distribution of work preferences among women. More generally, gender-equalized post-industrial societies can entail different patterns of family-work reconciliation, not simply extending to women the “industrial” view of work commitment, in which even men should “feminize” giving a higher contribution to the home production.

¹⁴⁷ As well known, Hakim (2000, 2006) distinguished between “career-centred”, “adaptive” and “home centred” men and women. These groups differ concerning both their values and degree of responsiveness to social/family policies. While the first group (on average around 20% of the whole female population in Western countries, see also Vitali et al., 2009) is highly responsive to family and social policies concerning the number of children, the second (on average around 60% of the female population) is highly responsive to a number of policies aiming to reconcile work and family duties. The third group (the remaining 20% of the population), is generally insensitive to family/social policies (*ibidem*).

The Netherlands may be a good example of both the two points. They were able to increase significantly both female labour market participation, by means of part-time employment, and fertility rates without a well-developed system of public childcare. Two possible interpretations of these results are possible, one underlying the continuation of the male breadwinner model through the “one-and-a-half” earner model (Blossfeld and Hofmeister, 2006; Visser, 2002), the other claiming that the “gender revolution” in the Netherlands is going to be actually completed by means of a strong emphasis on gender equality in home and an overall reconstruction of work-family arrangements. The Netherlands are just an example that there is no reason to focus part-time on working mothers only. Even if men are mainly “work-centred”, many men are “adaptive” in their work-family preferences. It is therefore necessary to develop unisex policies that recognize all three types of orientation across genders. We could also expect that now in the Netherlands the distributions of these three types of preferences between men and women are becoming more and more similar than in other countries.

All these arguments are not to defend part-time employment as an other “one-size-fits-all” policy. Following Plantenga (1996), part-time jobs can be interpreted in a “pessimistic” and “optimistic” way. The former underlines the “consolidation and perpetuation of the marginal position of women in response to employers’ search for flexibility and cheap labor, the latter stresses ‘model’ part-time employment as jobs for ‘well-educated professionals with a contract for at least a three-day workweek, who are, together with their partners, trying to achieve a more equitable distribution of paid work and caregiving duties” (*ibidem*, 68). The diffusion of such a part-time generates wider social changes, for “such part-time employees both reject and undermine two myths: the ‘nonemployed caregiver’ and the ‘carefree employee’” (*ibidem*). Of course the optimistic perspective can prevail only if both men and women will consider to accept part-time jobs. Data shown earlier in this chapter give some support to recent progresses in this direction, even if, as pointed out by Verbakel et al. (2008), still few men hold a part-time job, especially if married, with children and in the 25-55 age class. In these kinds of family settings, the “modified” male breadwinner arrangement (man working full-time and woman working part-time) is still largely dominant, while highly educated families entail couples’ members both working full time (*ibidem*).

However, one “lesson” from the Dutch experience is that family and social policies should be differentiated, focusing on both market and state solutions, and universally available, so that households’ decisions to reach the gender equilibrium can be different than a simple “masculinisation” of women’s careers. Part-time employment largely corresponds to Dutch women’s preferences and it is well possible that the Netherlands is moving toward a “universal carer” model¹⁴⁸. As Haas pointed out (2005), there are two typologies concerning gender equality, to be used in cross-national comparisons, clearly showing the inconsistencies of the Dutch

¹⁴⁸ The large majority of female part-time employment in the Netherlands is voluntary, while involuntary part-time is widespread in Southern European countries (Reyneri, 2008)

situation: the “culturalist” and the “structuralist” one. While the latter stresses female labour market integration and different welfare states more or less fostering the male-breadwinner model, the former focuses on social values and the gendered division of labour. According to the “structuralist” typology, the Netherlands are labelled as a “modified breadwinner” country (or one-and-a-half earner), as mentioned; following the “culturalist” one, the Netherlands are labelled as a “dual breadwinner/dual carer model” country. More research, including gender values and the division of domestic work, is needed to understand whether the Dutch institutional change has been really able to transform one of the most familialistic welfare in a Socialdemocratic model where, it is possible to hypothesize, part-time employment, market-driven de-familialization and gender equality play the same role than the public childcare system among Scandinavian countries. However, we have seen how “pure” public solutions are not without problems, even for gender equality, and they are not always feasible for their high costs, especially in a country like Italy. The Dutch solution of child care policy is aiming at sharing costs between the government, employers and parents, in a sort of “intermediate” solution between the state (Socialdemocratic model) and the market (Liberal model), and it also aims at redistributing paid and unpaid work between fathers and mothers as a good solution to the combination of work and family duties. Part-time jobs in the Netherlands have not a male breadwinner imprinting and the (potential) diffusion of the dual partial breadwinner model seems to make the Netherlands closer to countries like Denmark, where the higher cooperation of men in domestic work positively influences fertility rates (Olah, 2011; Esping-Andersen, 2009; Bonke and Esping-Andersen, 2009; Brodmann et al., 2007).

It is then an empirical question to what extent the modified breadwinner practices prevail on the gender-equalizing policies and cultural orientation in the Netherlands (Haas, 2005). But it has been recently recognized how a higher flexibility and freedom of choice, which are crucial elements of the Dutch system (Knijn and Saraceno, 2010), between different conciliation solutions have been in the last years at the top of the agenda of the Scandinavian policy-maker (Björk Eydal and Rostgaard, 2011).

If we link the longitudinal results of the second chapter with the EVS ones presented in the last two chapters, it is clear how both (men’s and women’s) preferences toward employment, the rigidity of the Italian labour market and the lack of public childcare constitute crucial factors to understand the low Italian female labour market participation. The situation gets more intricate when it comes to the question why Italian fertility rates are so low. Full-time employed women have no higher fertility rates in the Netherlands, so that it is necessary to understand why Dutch part-time employed and housewives have so much higher fertility. In the former case, the good quality of part-time jobs – i.e. with levels of protection, wage and benefits very similar to full-time ones – in the case of the Netherlands (Del Boca et al., 2005), which are really able to help women to reconcile work and family duties, may help to understand why Dutch part-time

employed have more children than their Italian counterparts, although the difference is huge. More difficult is to understand why also Dutch housewives have significantly higher fertility rates comparing with their Italian counterparts. These women face no “double burden” and there is no need to rely on social and family policies, like the public provisions of childcare, to explain this difference. Nor values can help here, as most religious women have much higher fertility both in Italy and the Netherlands and Italian housewives are significantly more religious than Dutch ones.

This result might be related to male partners’ help in housework and childcare, but the impact of this dimension may be weaker once women “decided” to stay at home. Of course income levels and economic well-being of one-earner households may be rather different in the two countries (see note 11), although in chapter one we have seen that income has no straightforward effects on fertility. Moreover, as argued by Del Boca (2002), in the Italian institutional setting it is well possible that even not working married women limit their fertility, given the difficulties for young labour market entrants to find a good and stable job position, a sort of indirect effect of labour market precariousness. Apart from the institutional and structural factors mentioned, it could be possible to rely on the same mechanisms used in the previous chapter to unravel the paradox of the positive correlation between religiosity and fertility at the micro-level and the high levels of “traditionalism” concomitantly with low fertility at the macro-level, using the frame of the “strong vs. weak” family systems. For instance, Dutch women who leave the labour market usually started their partnerships at earlier ages, and very likely with a cohabitation, comparing with their Italian counterparts. In this respect, Bratti and Tatsiramos (2011) found negative postponement effects of the age at first birth on the risks of having a second child in Southern Europe, especially among non-working women, religiosity being one of the potential mechanisms behind such effect (*ibidem*). Therefore, the mechanisms linking strong family ties and low fertility – i.e. a sharp quality-quantity trade-off, the latest-late age at leaving home and the limited diffusion of cohabitations and extra-marital births – may help to understand fertility differences between Italy and the Netherlands.

Conclusion

This thesis addressed theoretically and empirically how different factors affect fertility and female labour market participation, with a focus on the Italian case. The theoretical framework included both a structural, such as socioeconomic determinants at the micro-level and how they are shaped by the institutional setting, and a cultural dimension, i.e. norms and preferences toward the family domain.

According to these theoretical interests, the first chapter examined different streams of the sociological, economic and demographic literature which have dealt with the issues of work and family reconciliation. In the first part of the theoretical chapter, a framework to explain levels and patterns of fertility and female labour market participation based on the way different welfare regimes mediate Becker's micro-economics of the family has been presented. In this perspective, increasing female educational attainment is related to rising female labour market participation without causing too much decrease of fertility rates to the extent that the institutional setting is able to foster women's dual role. Therefore, the high familialism of the Mediterranean countries would constitute a major force behind the low fertility and female labour market participation pattern. Moreover, it has been mentioned how the postponement of the transition to adulthood as well, which is due not only to higher educational investments but also to increasing difficulties in finding a stable job, plays an important role to explain low fertility in Mediterranean countries. Indeed, here the partial and targeted labour market flexibilization has created a highly segmented labour market which obstacles young people's economic independency. The postponement of the transition to adulthood has stronger detrimental effects on fertility to the extent that in Mediterranean countries *tempo* effects on the *quantum* of fertility are stronger, as empirical evidence suggests.

The second part of the theoretical chapter introduced some complexity in this picture starting from some considerations about the cultural roots of the different institutional settings fostering or limiting the conciliation between work and family duties. In particular, it has been shown how cross-country fertility differences may be driven by the different views of women's role in society, which are embodied in the institutional setting of a country. Apart from the cultural foundation of those social and family policies which, it has been argued, play an important role to understand the international pattern of fertility and female labour market participation, in the following part of the chapter the direct effects of values and preferences on labour market and demographic behaviours have been considered. Particular attention has been paid to theories and studies of the Second Demographic Transition and cultural economics. It has been discussed how, on the one hand, intergenerational changes in values and attitudes may constitute an important additional explanation of the development of new family behaviours and

rising female labour market participation. On the other hand, cross-country heterogeneity in values and preferences, which is still very high regardless of common trends toward secularization, modern gender attitudes and post-materialism, do not easily explain the cross-country distribution of fertility and female labour market participation. Indeed, fertility is the lowest exactly in the most traditional countries, mainly Eastern and Southern European ones, which have the highest rate of housewifery and support greatly the male-breadwinner norm. In fact, this apparent paradox may be easily explained by acknowledging the mentioned cultural foundation of those institutional settings which foster women's dual role.

However, it is also argued that more traditional countries may contribute *directly* to a stronger postponement of the transition to adulthood and a lower fertility rate, i.e. apart and beyond the impact of the institutional setting. In this respect, the analytical distinction between "strong" and "weak" family systems has been adopted to argue that the actual number of children is not always a good proxy for the value attached to them in Southern European countries. Different mechanisms behind this argument have been discussed, from investments in children's quality in periods of economic uncertainty and rising consumption aspirations to the latest-age at leaving home which is a typical feature of Mediterranean countries. To support the idea that the reduction of fertility and the latest-age at leaving home are culturally defined, data concerning first and second generation Italian migrants in the U.S. and in Australia have been presented. Results suggest that the Italian and Southern European pattern of low cohabitation and extra-marital birth rates is largely mirrored among migrants in those countries, as well as the reduction of fertility between the first half of the '70s and the first half of the '90s. Moreover, after 1995 Italian fertility rates are increasing especially where new family forms and immigration flows are rising, so that fertility may be on the raise due to cultural reasons of opposite nature, such as the adoption of "modern" family behaviours as well as the "traditional" cultural orientations of many migrants from MENA and Latin American countries. But it should be said how in the same Central and Northern Italian regions also conciliation mechanisms such as public childcare provisions and part-time jobs have become more widespread and the negative consequences of labour market flexibilization are somewhat weaker. This is a clear hint suggesting how the institutional and cultural dimensions fostering work-family reconciliation and new family forms are highly interconnected. And it has been shown, for instance, that childcare policies are effective measure to foster fertility only where attitudes toward women's role in society have changed (Baizán, 2009; Krapf, 2009).

As many highly educated Italian women did enter the labour market in the last decades, thus making dual-earner families more common, it is clear the urgency of adopting the Italian familialistic institutional setting to such a new situation. Also because it is becoming increasingly necessary for Italian households having two incomes in order to have children, given the increasing difficulties for Italian men to get a secure and well-paid job. That is why the theoretical

discussion of the first chapter is ended briefly discussing what kind of social and family policies is needed in Italy. It is argued that, although changing economic circumstances and women's behaviours strongly justify a policy change to ease the conciliation of work and family duties, the choice of the specific welfare measures can not completely neglects the normative environment dominant in the Italian setting, such as the preference toward informal childcare and the lack of fathers' contribution to the household chores. Therefore, the reference to the cultural dimension underlying female labour market participation and demographic behaviours is important not only for a better sociological understanding of those phenomena, but also to implement effective policies.

So far the quite broad theoretical interests which constitute the common thread of the following empirical chapters of the thesis have been summarized. It is necessary then to make an assessment of their real contribution to that discussion.

In the second chapter the "structural" theoretical framework outlined in the first chapter has been applied to study the patterns of female labour market participation and fertility in Italy, focusing on how micro- and meso-mechanisms are shaped by the specific Italian institutional setting.

Considering globally the analyses of the Work>Family and Family>Work analytical paths, the results confirm how during the fordist period, after WWII until the first half of the '70s, the transition to parenthood strongly relied on the male breadwinner norm. Very few career-oriented women worked and their labour market participation was almost totally unrelated to their childbearing decisions. On the opposite, women's participation decisions were highly dependent on within-couple educational differentials, with those women married with highly educated men being less likely to be employed around childbirths. The transition to parenthood happened quite early in life also because, after the exit from the school system, men could easily find a stable job and leave home to get married.

The pattern of women's economic dependence on men's resources substantially changed in the post-fordist period, when the transition to parenthood started to be strongly postponed, even net of higher educational attainment. Not only women's earning potentials have become less negatively correlated with the transition to motherhood, but their labour market participation has been found to be independent from their husbands' educational and economic resources too. This may not primarily be a sign of an eased reconciliation between work and family duties, for actually female labour market participation around childbirths only increased across cohorts as an effect of raising educational attainment and among women who limited their childbearing decisions. Indeed, women with only one child are found to leave more frequently the labour market at the childbirth, which constitutes a crucial moment for participation decision, but also to re-enter few years after: in absence of adequate policies and husbands' support, the only available reconciliation measure for working women has been to reduce fertility.

The lack of social and family policies is confirmed if we look at the characteristics of those working women who leave the labour market around the first childbirth. Women working in the school system, the P.A., the agricultural sector as well as holding a voluntary part-time job are the least likely to withdraw, i.e. those women with more family-friendly work arrangements.

Third chapter adds some insights concerning the mechanisms behind the transition to first and second childbirths during the fordist period. Analyses show how strongly interconnected are marriage and childbearing decisions in the Italian setting among the selected cohorts and how the former is strongly connected with men's economic condition. In this male-breadwinner society, net of socioeconomic factors, Southerners are much faster at the transition to first marriage, mainly due to higher preferences toward marriage since even the generation 1.5 of South-North migrants has been found to be faster than Northerners. While the distance between marriage and first childbirth has to be traced back to different levels and patterns of female labour market participation in the two areas, Southerners and first generation migrants have been found to have much higher risks to make the transition to the second child as well.

These results complement the findings of the previous chapter and are useful in light of the theoretical interests of the thesis for different reasons. First of all, they confirm the role of the socialization to traditional family values to study demographic behaviours, thus corroborating some of the predictions of the SDT. At the same time, they clearly represent the Italian, and largely Southern European, pattern of family behaviours, especially the close temporal interlink between leaving home, marriage and first childbirth. Before the huge increase in female educational attainment and when economic circumstances were favourable, a context of traditional family values and behaviours, paralleled by the complete lack of family policies, was beneficial to fertility rates. It should be noticed that during the fordist period not only the transition to parenthood occurred quite early in life in Italy, but fertility rates were also higher than in many Central and Northern European countries, especially because of the very high fertility rates in Southern Italian regions. Results of the third chapter suggest that the latter have been mainly the result of higher preferences toward marriage and children.

In the fourth chapter values and preferences relevant for the family domain have been measured more directly, in light of the SDT's and Inglehart's theses of intergenerational shift toward secularization, equal gender attitudes and post-materialism. If, as it has been shown in the third chapter, normative elements such as religiosity and traditional gender attitudes do have a strong and presumably causal impact on demographic behaviours and the former are decreasing across cohorts, it is justified to add those factors in standard accounts of decreasing fertility rates and the development of new family behaviours. Results show that in many (Central, Western and Christian) European countries there has been a decrease of traditional attitudes toward the gender roles and religiosity, although in recent years a huge cross-country heterogeneity in those values is still detectable. Some of the countries with more traditional values, Italy being maybe the most

striking example, share a peculiarity: at the micro-level, the robust correlation between religiosity, gender attitudes and post-materialism with fertility, female labour market participation and family arrangements respectively is stronger, while at the macro-level they experience lower levels of female labour market participation, new family forms and fertility as well.

The results of the analyses generally contribute to the research questions raised in the first chapter, showing the importance of values and attitudes on demographic trends as hypothesized by the SDT and other streams of the literature. Nevertheless, it may appear more difficult to understand why more traditional countries have lower fertility rates. In the chapter the analytical distinction between “strong” and “weak” family ties has been adopted to clarify this apparent paradox. This has been done mainly by means of theoretical arguments, for this hypothesis has not been tested explicitly. In fact, the finding may be easily explained based on the discussion presented in the first chapter and briefly recalled at the beginning of this concluding paragraph. Apart from the crucial lack of social and family policies fostering the conciliation of work and family duties in more traditional countries, it is argued how strong family systems, which hinder leaving home at early ages, cohabitations and extra-marital births, may well have negatively influenced fertility behaviours in the last decades. At the same time, strong family systems may help explaining why the behavioural consequences of value orientations are stronger in more traditional countries.

At the empirical level, a large degree of overlap has been found between strong-family, as recognized in the literature, Catholic and highly religious countries on the one hand and those where religiosity, traditional gender attitudes and post-materialist values are strong predictors of demographic behaviours on the other hand. In the sociological and economic literature on religiosity it has been argued how institutional and relational factors are by far more relevant than religious beliefs and dogmas *per se* to understand the behavioural consequences of the religious experience. This is part of the argument adopted to justify theoretically the use of adherence to dogma as an instrument for religiosity. Strong family ties and the belonging to a community of believers reinforce, by means of social control and sanctioning, the likelihood that traditional beliefs toward the family domain are translated into the “appropriate” behaviours. And the measurement part of the work showed that attendance to religious services and trust in churches are much more reliable indicators of religiosity in Southern European and Catholic countries.

In the fifth chapter the last topic treated in the theoretical chapter has been addressed, i.e. the need for policy reforms in order to overcome the Italian and Southern European low fertility-low female labour market participation equilibrium in presence of endogenous preferences. This aim has been pursued by means of a theoretical and empirical comparison of Italy and the Netherlands, as the latter constitute a good example of breaking the institutional path dependency. The extent to which policy reform in the Netherlands may be interpreted as a purely exogenous exercise of institutional engineering is questioned in several ways. First, the chapter argues how

the changes in the conservative and highly familialistic welfare regime in the Netherlands have been facilitated by socio-political conditions which allowed to limit the orientation toward short-term and partisan utility maximization of politicians, trade unions, and representatives of professionals and entrepreneurs. In short, a generalized mentality which is far from the behavioural rules which may be summarized by the concept of “amoral familism”. Second, the process of institutional reform has been preceded by a strong cultural shift which entails a sharp secularization process, changed attitudes toward the gender roles and a high diffusion of moral individualism and liberal orientations. The latter coevolved with institutional reforms such as a higher availability of good quality part-time jobs and flexible childcare arrangements strongly relying on subsidised private provisions. Instead of completing the “women’s revolution”, to cite Esping-Andersen (2009), by means of the full-time inclusion of women in the public sector, thus commodifying their childcare activities and generating highly horizontal segregation in the labour market, the Dutch policy maker, but mostly as an effect of policy recipients’ behaviours, opted for more flexible solutions which strongly stress the need for a general redistribution of the leisure, childcare, housework and working time as well as a more equal gendered division between paid and unpaid work.

At the empirical level, the chapter showed that in the Netherlands trends toward secularization already occurred before 1990, following the “de-pillarization” process started during the ‘60s. Therefore, in 1990 huge differences in the levels of religiosity in Italy and the Netherlands are found, which remained almost unchanged until 2009. As far as gender attitudes, in the Netherlands there has been a huge decline in traditional orientations between 1990 and 2000, both among men and women, exactly when most of the policy reforms to increase female labour market participation were implemented. Between 1990 and 2009, no trends toward more modern attitudes toward the gender roles have been detected among Italian men and women, although female educational attainment and labour market participation did increase in that time span. This result implies not only that low female labour market participation may be caused, at least partially, by the persistence of traditional gender attitudes, but also that rising female educational attainment has not been paralleled by major cultural shifts in the Italian setting. Analyses confirmed these hypotheses for while women’s gender attitudes are more strongly correlated with their participation decisions in Italy than in the Netherlands, the opposite is true as far as the correlation between gender attitudes and education is concerned. Moreover, the persistence of men’s traditional gender attitudes may work as an additional obstacle to women’s labour market participation around childbirths in Italy. However, part-time employment seems to be much less structured by value orientations than full-time one, as most of the differences between Italy and the Netherlands in part-time employment rates are not explained by the heterogeneity in values between the two countries across waves. This would reinforce the idea that increasing the availability of more flexible labour market arrangements may be a crucial

policy to help women conciliate work and family duties. That is also because a higher integration of women into the labour market would foster a more equal division of childcare and domestic chores within the households, as some results for Italy already suggest (Mencarini and Tanturri, 2004). The last empirical chapter of the thesis is ended discussing to what extent the Dutch experience, based on a mix of reconciliation policies which leaves more freedom of choice to couples and strongly focuses on gender equality, may be a good model to be followed by the Italian policy maker.

After having summarized the main findings of my empirical chapters, it is worth coming back to the research questions of my thesis focusing on the Italian case. An overall interpretation of the specific Italian pattern of fertility and female labour market participation in different periods and areas of Italy, based both on the theoretical framework presented in the first chapter and the following empirical analyses, will help to address the main limitations of the latter and to orientate future research on the issue of work and family reconciliation in Italy as well as other European countries.

Following the framework of previous chapters, it is possible to summarize three periods in the Italian demographic development after WWII. The *fordist period* has been characterized by a highly consistent system based on the male-breadwinner norm. The latter was embodied both at the institutional and the cultural levels. The lack of family policies, due to the familialistic principle of subsidiarity, and the strong protection of the employment of the male worker favoured a gendered division of paid and unpaid work and assured the preservation of the strong family ties within a traditional family model, features which were consistent with the influence of the Catholic Church. In a period of rapid economic growth, this sociocultural system allowed family formation at early ages, relatively high fertility and low female labour market participation. As far as North/South differences, in this setting the higher attachment to those traditional values in Southern regions, also due to widespread socioeconomic backwardness, was beneficial for higher fertility rates comparing with Northern ones.

This equilibrium has been set under pressure by several circumstances at the beginning of the '70s. In the period which goes from *the first half of the '70s to the first half of the '90s*, rising educational attainment, especially among women, and economic uncertainty due to the fordist crisis have not been paralleled by major changes neither at the institutional nor at the cultural level, so that Italy has not been able to “metabolize” those processes of socioeconomic change. The increasing women's opportunity costs of childbearing together with rising parental aspirations for social mobility and consumerist life-style of their offspring produced a sharp postponement of fertility decisions and eventually a huge decline in fertility rates, although female labour market participation increased only slightly. Moreover, the historically rooted Italian and largely Mediterranean feature of a long permanence in the family of origin received a boost from the same mechanisms which worked behind the fertility drop, as leaving home in Italy

was strictly linked to family formation. Therefore, also leaving home has been postponed starting from the '70s because of increasing educational attainment, labour market uncertainty and high perceived opportunity-costs of early marriage due to the high standards of living and freedom enjoyed in the parental home. In this second period the pattern of regional heterogeneity was as such that while fertility rates were still higher in Southern regions than in Northern ones, the increase in female labour market participation mainly concerned the latter, also due to a more family-friendly environment in terms of availability of part-time jobs and childcare services. Also the postponement of leaving home was more widespread in Northern regions, regardless of the far better employment chances for young people, mainly because the above-mentioned opportunity-costs of marriage were higher in Northern regions (Billari and Ongaro, 1998). However, in this period the North/South gap in fertility has significantly shrunk, not only because of the very high Southern fertility rates after WWII, but also because of the increasing difficulties for Southern men to play their breadwinner role and the financial constraints of one-earner families.

After 1995 the female labour market participation-fertility equilibrium started to change again and its regional heterogeneity has become more interesting and partly unexpected, proceeding further toward a reduction of the North/South fertility gap. Indeed, since 1995 fertility rates in Italy have been slowly but steadily increasing, at least until the recent economic crisis. While in the previous period the culturally determined rigidity of the family formation process may have worked as an obstacle to the transition to adulthood, the spreading of cohabitations, extra-marital births and marital instability in Northern regions seem now to go hand in hand with higher fertility rates, which recently have exceeded the Southern ones. And it is not by chance that the postponement of leaving home, for the first time since decades, is now higher in Southern regions comparing with Northern ones (Benassi and Novello, 2007). These reversing macro-correlations between “modern” family behaviours and fertility rates, which are confirmed if we look at regional female labour market participation rates, by far higher in Northern regions, have been tested in an international comparative and longitudinal analysis by Prskawetz et al. (2010). The authors, by means of fixed-effects estimation on pooled time-series data, showed how the causal impact of the increasing postponement of parenthood, extra-marital births and divorce rates is actually negative, but differing strongly according to time and space. In 1999-2001 (the last analysed years) and culturally modern countries (Scandinavia, France, U.K. and the Netherlands) those fertility-related behaviours have a positive causal effect on fertility (see also Van Bavel and Nitsche, 2012; Bratti and Tatsiramos, 2011). These results, on the one hand, confirm how in a traditional Catholic country like Italy, especially between the '70s and first half of the '90s, processes linked to higher educational attainment and women's integration into the labour market have been strongly detrimental to fertility. On the other hand, they are consistent with the differing patterns of fertility and female labour market participation between Northern and Southern Italian regions as a result of the diffusion of SDT in the former.

However, relying only on the diffusion of the SDT and new family behaviours may tell only part of the story. It has been stressed indeed the importance of the implementation of family policies and part-time employment availability in Northern regions, similarly to a comparison between Italy as a whole and Northern European countries, to understand the reversed sign of the macro-correlation between female labour market participation and fertility (Del Boca and Rosina, 2009). It is interesting to notice how, even within Italy, policies seem to work only in a changed cultural framework in which behaviours such as female labour market participation, cohabitations and extra-marital births, separations and divorces have become widely accepted.

The promising picture, at least among Northern Italian regions, concerning the last 15 years which has been outlined is however obscured by two concomitant factors. The first one is related to the partial and targeted labour market flexibilization reforms which have been carried out exactly in that period. The development of new family behaviours, an earlier exit from the parental home and the increase in fertility rates may have been partly hindered by the negative socioeconomic consequences of economic precariousness on the labour market, as many already reviewed analyses suggest. Moreover, this may help explaining the different demographic trends followed by Northern and Southern Italy in the post-fordist period. Indeed, it has been suggested that while the higher postponement of leaving home in Northern Italy during the last century was mainly caused by cultural factors, the recent difficulties of young Southerners compared to their Northerner counterparts are primarily due neither to the rigidity of the family formation process nor to the perceived opportunity-costs of marriage. In fact, more than 30% of working Southerners aged 30-39 who are still found to live with the family of origin hold a fixed-term contract, while the same figure drops to less than 15% among those working Southerners who left the parental home (Rosina, 2007).

The second factor is related to the huge immigration flows which have interested Italy in the last twenty years. High immigrants' fertility rates explain a significant share of the recent increase in the Italian fertility rates, accounting for about one decimal point of the TFR in the period 2008-2010 according to ISTAT (<http://dati.istat.it/>). Let us consider the cases of Campania and Emilia-Romagna, a Southern and Northern region respectively, which have been taken as an example of the potential effect of family policies on the reversal of the macro-correlation between female labour market participation and fertility among Italian regions (Del Boca and Rosina, 2009). In fact, fertility rate in Emilia-Romagna among natives has been about 1.26 in the period 2008-2010, thus still below the lowest-low fertility threshold, while in Campania the same figure has been about 1.42. In sum, it is true that fertility in Southern regions is sluggish while in Northern regions is on the rise – in Emilia-Romagna and Campania TFR was below 1 and above 1.5 in 1995 respectively – but this may be due to the better economic circumstances and immigration flows more than the development of family policies itself.

As it is possible to see at the end of this very brief interpretation of Italian demographic trends in the last 50/60 years, many questions are left open, especially as far as the more recent developments are concerned, which have been almost completely neglected in the empirical analyses of the thesis. For instance, in the first two empirical chapters the recent rise in fertility rates and its causes has not been analysed, also due to data limitations. North/South differences have therefore focused mainly on the fordist period, prior to important institutional and cultural changes which have happened in Northern regions and when fertility rates were much higher in Southern ones. At the same time, in the second chapter, although it is referred to the role of the lack of family policies in the Italian setting to understand decreasing fertility rates, in the empirical analyses the availability of childcare services, which may also contribute to explain the weakening of the trade-off between employment and first motherhood which has been found in the post-fordist period, has not been operationalized.

Generally speaking, each chapter may have its own theoretical and empirical value by analysing the micro- and meso-mechanism of the transition to parenthood and female labour market participation in light of the Italian institutional setting (chapter 2), showing the structural and cultural determinants of the transition to first marriage and first and second childbirths in Italy (chapter 3), showing the macro-micro paradox of the impact of values and attitudes on demographic behaviours (chapter 4) and comparing the institutional and cultural paths followed by Italy and the Netherlands and its potential demographic consequences (chapter 5). Although each chapter may say something about a single aspect of the story, related to economic or cultural factors respectively, it is difficult to assess, based on the provided empirical results, to what extent, for instance, fertility trends and patterns in Italy and Europe are due to institutional or cultural factors. As mentioned, both are actually left largely unmeasured in the empirical analyses (chapter 2), measured only indirectly (chapter 3) or not jointly modelled (chapter 4). When it is argued about the mechanisms by which strong family ties may explain why a traditional country like Italy (or regions within Italy in recent years) have lower fertility rates, only some theoretical or indirect evidence is provided. To what extent the decrease in Italian fertility rates can be traced back to investments in the quality of children at expense of quantity, limited cohabitations and extra-marital births? As the development of those new behaviours is often correlated with the implementation of family policies, how the real contribution of the former on fertility rates can be disentangled? The empirical analyses presented in this work give only a very limited contribution to answer those questions.

In my partial defence, I can say that even in the literature these issues are still far from being strongly clarified. However, what I wanted to underline with my theoretical and empirical efforts is that norms and cultural factors may be of crucial importance to understand family behaviours even when post-materialistic values have become widespread and the process of disenchantment of Western societies has made rational calculus and utility maximization the

prevalent determinants of human agency (Weber, 1917). Liefbroer and Billari stressed this argument showing how even in the individualized and culturally modern Netherlands almost all people perceive, among the rest, the existence of an age deadline for completing childbearing (2010), a deadline which goes much beyond the mere biological boundaries and varies a lot across countries (Van Bavel and Nitsche, 2012), thus contributing to different fertility consequences (Prskawetz et al., 2010).

A better theoretical knowledge of the building blocks of social norms and how they interact with institutional settings and economic factors will certainly contribute a lot to our understanding of demographic behaviours and their changes over time.

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