MARITAL AND REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOR IN ITALY AFTER 1990: BRIDGING THE GAP WITH WESTERN EUROPE?

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Abstract

With regard to *cohabitations*, Italy, in spite of a delay of 20-25 years, has begun imitate other Western countries. The number of *marital dissolutions* has rapidly been increasing, but still far from the level observed in countries such as the USA, the UK and France. Italy's *fertility* has also begun to change, mainly in the Centre-North areas, where the TFR went from 1.1 children per woman in 1995 to 1.4 ten years later. In the South, fertility decline has not come to a halt. The territorial diffusion of cohabitations, marital dissolution and out-of-wedlock births, overlaps closely with the decline in births in the first half of the 20th century, which in turn replicated the territorial diffusion of scolarization, industrialization and (above all) secularization.

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1. Introduction

At the beginning of 1980s, some clues of new marital and reproductive behaviors were visible also in Italy (ISTAT, 1986). However in the following fifteen years, the Italian family changed in ways that were in part unexpected (Castiglioni and Dalla Zuanna, 1994). Although the age at first marriage increased rapidly, behaviors that questioned the centrality of marriage were hardly widespread: cohabitation and out-of-wedlock births did not increase nor did marital separation become common. Moreover, fertility decreased towards levels never reached by north Europe and oversea English speaking countries. During the 1990s, Italy – mainly in the north central regions – was the "champion" of the so called lowest-low fertility (Kohler et al., 2002). Italy shared the behavioral changes described above with both other southern European countries (Spain, Portugal and Greece) as well as the rich countries of East Asia (Caldwell and Schindlmayr, 2003).

In this work we discuss if these Italian "anomalies" are disappearing, and if Italy is therefore moving towards marital and reproductive models already quite widespread in most other developed countries. We observe if in Italy after 1990, cohabitation and marital separations became more pervasive, and at what speed and in which ways. Moreover, we describe the patterns of the recent increase in fertility, and if it may be an indicator of more considerable future changes.

The approach which follows is primarily descriptive in nature. However, in order to formulate hypotheses with regard to future developments, a few interpretive elements are provided. We do this by gathering together the results of recent studies and by developing

original analyses, mainly territorial analyses. The observation of the substantial differences between different areas in Italy – in particular between the rich regions of the Centre-North and the less economically developed southern regions – provides a useful tool for identifying the direction of family changes (figure 1).

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

2. Diffusion of cohabitation and out-of-wedlock births

Those cohorts born in the mid-1950s have the lowest average age at marriage in Italy. Half of the women were already married before their 24th birthday and half of the men before they turned 27. The cohorts that followed, however, began to postpone marriage, especially in the northern and central regions of Italy (table 1). We cannot yet know just how much this delay of marriage will transform into a renouncement. Regardless, it would be extremely difficult for the more recent cohorts to reach the low proportion of never married of those born in 1954, even if in the opinion surveys very few Italians who are not married refuse *a priori* the idea of eventually wedding. In the 1954 cohort, only 9% of women and 11% of men at the age 50 had never married. These are the lowest values for all those born in the 20th century. The ensuing "escape" from marriage can be understood within the context of an increasingly extended period before entering adulthood. For example, in Italy, the average age at first marriage for men dramatically parallels the average age of the ordination of priests, going from 27 years of age in 1976 to 31 years of age in 2001 (Diotallevi, 2005, p. 210).

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

2.1. THE RAPID INCREASE OF COHABITATIONS IN THE LAST DECADE

As mentioned above, until the mid-1990s, new marital and reproductive behaviors in Italy such as cohabitation and out-of-wedlock births were hardly widespread. In the following years, many changes are in course (table 2). For the cohort born in 1976-80, a smaller proportion of men and women aged 20 and 25 live with their parents than the cohort born in 1966-70. There has also been an increase in the number of youth who live alone, with friends or with their partner. However, these proportions are quite a bit lower than those observed in Northern Europe or in the oversea English speaking countries. There, the majority of youth aged 20 has already left the parental home and many have already cohabitated (Corijn and Klijzing, 2001; Billari, 2004). Notwithstanding this difference, a clear tendency towards change in Italy has become apparent.

That Italy has begun to run the same course as other developed countries is also supported by additional recently available data. The proportion of women with at least one experience of cohabitation has increased, especially for those cohorts born from the 1970s on (table 3). In addition, marriages in which the couple previously cohabitated have rapidly increased in recent years. This is particularly true for some of the centre-north regions (table 4). At a national level, only 6% of first weddings celebrated in the eighties and 12% of those celebrated in the nineties were preceded by cohabitation, compared to 22% in the five year period 1999-2003.

Furthermore, the diffusion of births outside of marriage follows a similar geographic pattern to the great fertility decline which occurred in the first half of the 20th century (Dalla Zuanna and Righi, 1999). That is, these trends spread from the areas of earliest industrialization, secularization and scolarization: Piemonte, Liguria, and Lombardia. In 2004, in several of the central and northern areas, more than 25% of births occurred outside of marriage (refer back to table 4). As young, single mothers are a rarity in Italy (the fertility rates for the age groups 15-19 and 20-24 are among the lowest in the world) the increase of out-of-wedlock births suggests that in these regions a large number of young couples are living together.

[TABLES 2-4 ABOUT HERE]

2.2. INTERPRETING PAST DELAYS AND THE CONTEMPORARY ACCELERATION OF CHANGE

Researchers have attempted to explain the motives behind the double delayed entry into adulthood which characterizes Italy. In other words, why young Italians leave the parental home at a later age with respect to youth in Central and Northern Europe, and why new marital and reproductive behaviors have spread much later. Three interpretative frameworks can be identified, helping us to understand the significance of recent and accelerated changes in behavior.

In the first place, the diffusion of new marital behaviors is closely linked to the *process of secularization*. Empirical data which supports this argument seems to provide incontrovertible evidence. Below, we will provide detailed evidence of a strong correlation between, on the one hand, the geographical distribution of proportions of children born out-of-wedlock, marriages which were preceded by cohabitation, and legal separations, and on the other hand, votes in favor of divorce in the 1974 referendum. Many analyses have also demonstrated that those individuals more involved in the Catholic Church have a lower probability of cohabiting and separating (as well as using modern contraception and having sexual intercourse at a young age).

A second possible interpretive framework for these changes concerns *restraint factors.* Young Italians may be forced to remain for extended periods of time in the parental home due to a series of material constraints. These include: elevated levels of unemployment, scarcity of available housing at reasonable renting rates, prolonged university studies beyond the expected number of years, lack of policies to support leaving the parental home at a young age (Livi Bacci 2001; Kohler et al. 2002). However, there are several counterarguments to this apparently neat linear explanation. To begin with, for the entire 1990s, youth unemployment was essentially absent from most of the provinces in the Centre and North. This exactly where there occurred a rapid increase in the proportion of individuals over 30

years of age who still lived with their parents. Furthermore, in the less developed and poorer South, the provinces with the highest levels of unemployment were also those areas where couples tend to marry earliest. That is likely because high levels of unemployment for youth are clues not only of economic difficulties but also of cultural backwardness (Dalla Zuanna and Righi, 1999). Finally, we may also take into consideration the following "natural experiment". In 1996, researchers studied the living arrangements of second generation immigrants in Australia (table 5). With regard to the labor market, housing and welfare, the children of Italians and Greeks were similar to native children and children of immigrants from northern Europe and New Zealand. However, the children of the Greeks and Italians differ sharply from children of Australians or other immigrants of the same age in that they rarely live alone or with friends, or have had experiences of cohabitation (a similar situation applies to the youth who come from other southern European countries, as well as Lebanon and China – the latter when they immigrated with the entire family).

[TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE]

A third and final interpretation of the delayed diffusion of cohabitation in Italy concerns the *type of relationship between parents and children*. This argument is based on the notion that the apparent homogeneity of the "bourgeois family" across the developed world was not necessarily a reality. Even in the past, there were significant differences in family relationships between, on the one hand, north-western Europe and oversea English speaking countries, and on the other, southern European and eastern Asian countries. With regard to the former two, intergenerational relationships weakened as an individual entered adolescence, while in the latter two, these relationships remained very strong all life long. These differences, which have deeply rooted in the past (Reher, 1998), do not so much result in a dissimilar love between parents and children, as they do in different practical manifestations.

It follows that in the societies where intergenerational relationships are strong, innovative behavior of the younger generations can spread only if is not obstructed by the parents.

Parents are extremely influential and powerful in their ability to conduct their children towards marital behaviors which are in line with their expectations. Not only do they use moral pressure – facilitated moreover by life together – but they can also adopt more concrete tools of persuasion, such as considerable monetary help for constructing or buying a home. Indeed, more than 50% of couples in Italy who married in the 1990s received this sort of aid from their parents (Barbagli et al. 2003, cap.4). In order to become widespread, the practice of cohabitation had to wait for a generation of parents who were accepting of it – or those who grew up during the "cultural revolution" in Italy during the 1970s[1].

Data supporting this interpretive theory seems convincing. By 1983, a significant proportion of young Italians considered cohabitation to be admissible and did not exclude the idea of doing it themselves (table 6). However, among these youth there also existed a widespread perception that society expressed hostility towards this choice and only a limited number cohabited. The same questions were asked again every 4-5 years. Over time, the number of youth who considered cohabitation to be admissible and did not exclude the possibility of doing it themselves grew only slightly, while the perception of societal acceptance towards this choice changed precisely for the youth born during the 1970s and 1980s. That is, the children of parents who were young just before or during the "cultural revolution" of the 1970s.

[TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE]

The notion that cohabitation in Italy spread only with acquiescence of the parents, and thus a generation behind that of the northern European countries, has been suggested by

[1] Several important dates with regard to the "cultural revolution" in Italy in the 1970s should be mentioned: 1970, divorce became legal; 1971, contraceptive advertising was legalized; 1974, confirmative referendum in favor of divorce; 1975, new family law which equalized the rights of children born out-of-wedlock and those born within marriage; 1978, the legalization of abortion; 1981, confirmative referendum in favor of abortion.

more sophisticated analyses as well. Rosina and Fraboni (2004) demonstrated that in order to "explain" – with statistical models – the probability of cohabiting, it was more useful to examine certain characteristics of the parents, rather than those of the children. *Ceteris paribus,* the probability of individuals cohabiting or having cohabited was higher because their parents hold a university or high school degree rather than because they themselves hold a high school or university degree. Secondly, as mentioned above, the territorial pattern of new marital behaviors is practically identical to the decrease in births in the beginning of the 20th century. The less diffused occurrence of cohabitation and out-of-wedlock births in the South may thus be related to the delayed start in cultural changes that has accompanied these new marital choices. A similar pattern has been observed in order to explain the late leaving of natural fertility and the enduring high birth rates in many areas of southern Italy up until the end of the 1960s (Livi Bacci, 1977). This perspective upholds the idea of a steady sequence of developments with regard to marital and reproductive choices in Italy in the 20th century which are intimately intertwined with intergenerational change and lasting territorial differences.

3. The increase in marital dissolutions

3.1. A RAPID CHANGE, BUT STILL IN ITS FIRST PHASES

In the last fifteen years, marital dissolutions in Italy have almost doubled (table 7)[2]. In 2003, one legal separation was recorded for every three marriages while 15 years earlier, this ratio was one separation every eight marriages because during the same period, the actual number of marriages has decreased. In order to study the process of this diffusion in an analytical manner, we have built life tables by separation, for the marriage cohorts celebrated in Italy from 1969-98. For the earliest cohorts, the tables refer to the first 25-30 years of marriage;

[2] In the great majority of Italian cases, the "public" dissolution of a marriage is ratified by legal separation, rather than by divorce, that may or may not take place at least three years after.

for the following cohorts, the probabilities of separation for durations up to the 25th year of marriage were predicted (table 8) [3].

[TABLES 7-8 ABOUT HERE]

The occurrence of separations has steadily increased, cohort after cohort. The proportion of marriages dissolved before their 25th wedding anniversary rose from 8% (of marriages celebrated from 1969-73), to 10% (1974-78), 24% (1989-93), to 31% (1994-98). For all of the cohorts of marriage, the probability of separating increased until the 5th year of marriage, and then remained fairly constant until about the 20-25th wedding anniversary, without any specific duration that seemed particularly at risk (figure 2).

The increase of marital separations in Italy may still be in its first phase. Our projections suggest that 19% of weddings celebrated in the early 1990s will end before their 20th anniversary with a legal separation. This proportion has already been reached or overcome for marriages celebrated in the early 1940s (in the USA), 1960s (UK), 1970s (France) and 1980s (Japan); see table 8. Furthermore, during the same periods the distribution by duration of marriage for these countries (with the exception of Japan) was very similar to the distribution by duration for marriages celebrated in Italy in the early 1990s. As marital separations have become ever more frequent in the USA, UK and France, they have also increasingly occurred during the 5-9 duration (figure 2). Only future observations will tell us whether Italy will follow a similar trend.

[FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

[3] To refer to the methodology employed, see Castiglioni and Dalla Zuanna (2006). There, the underlying hypotheses concerning the estimates of marital separation rates in the Italian regions are also described.

3.2. THE ENORMOUS TERRITORIAL DIFFERENCES

Notwithstanding a general tendency in recent years towards homogenization, the relatively low levels of marital separation in Italy hide great territorial differences (table 9 and figure 3). Separations most commonly occur in the north-western regions (Piemonte, Val d'Aosta and Liguria), in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, and in the two predominantly "red" regions (Toscana and Emilia-Romagna). In the last two regions, the Communist Party had always the majority of votes after the second World War, and the process of secularization was relatively rapid. Lazio, where half of the inhabitants live in the urban area of Rome, also has a higher percentage of separations. The lowest levels are in the South, with the exception of Sardegna. Our estimates suggest that only 15% of marriages celebrated in the South in 1998 will end in legal separation within their 20th wedding anniversary. This is same level recorded for the north-western regions twenty years earlier. The other regions have medium levels of separations. Veneto, in the North-east, provides an interesting case, in that the proportion of separations is quite low, likely due to the considerable influence of the Catholic Church during the 19th and 20th centuries. Generally, a geographical perspective reveals a very close overlap between the intensity of secularization and the proportion of legal separations. The territorial linear correlation between our estimates of separations for marriages celebrated in 1998 and votes in favor of divorce in the 1974 referendum is equal to 0.89[4].

[TABLE 9 AND FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE]

[4]The level of secularization in any given Italian region may be measured by the proportion of people voting in favour of divorce in the 1974 referendum. This electoral competition called for an abolition of the Divorce Act of 1970, and was characterized by considerable involvement of the Vatican, dioceses and parishes in an effort to put an end to divorce.

The significant strength of secularization as an explanation for the different pace of diffusion of new marital and reproductive behaviors in Italy – not only marital dissolutions – is confirmed by other, more sophisticated empirical results. Considering the 95 Italian provinces as units of analysis, Livi Bacci (1977) showed that the linear correlation between votes at the referendum of 1974 and the level of marital fertility in 1911, 1931, 1951 and 1961 is higher than the correlation with the contemporary indicators of education and urbanization, especially in the central and northern parts of Italy. Dalla Zuanna and Righi (1999) conducted a similar analysis using a more recent data set. Their results showed that a geographical view (on a provincial level) of levels of cohabitation, out-of-wedlock fertility and separations at the end of the 20th century is quite similar to that of the geographical diffusion of great fertility decline in the first half of the 20th century. This perspective also overlaps with the territorial diffusion of secularization (measured using different indicators), even when other variables of modernization, such as income and urbanization, were statistically controlled for. The territorial consistency with regard to the diffusion of new marital and reproductive behaviors is also confirmed by the data in the last columns of table 9. Here we can see that the linear correlation between marriages celebrated in 1998 ending in separation and out-of-wedlock fertility in 2004 is 0.84. However, it should be noted that the correlation with the proportion of marriages which were preceded by cohabitation is a bit lower (0.60), likely because this indicator does not consider cohabitations which were not followed by a marriage.

4. Fertility

4.1. The upturn of fertility rates in the Centre-North and the upset of traditional regional differences

After having reached a minimum value of 515 thousand in 1998, the number of births in Italy began to increase, surpassing 550 thousand in 2004 and 2005. As the number of women aged 20-39 in this same period decreased (as the numerous women born in 1955-64 slowly

began to be "replaced" by the lower number of women born in the 1980s), the fertility rate surpassed 1.30 children per woman in 2004 and 2005. This is 15-16% higher than the minimum reached in 1998 (table 10)[5].

National level data reflects the sum of very different territorial fertility histories (table 11). In the southern regions, the decline in fertility rates persisted (even if it progressively slowed) up until 2004. In the central and northern regions, on the other hand, the minimum fertility rate was reached in the early 1990s and then increased in the following years. In fact, in 2004, fertility levels went high enough to reach, and in some of these regions rose above, the fertility levels recorded in early 1980s.

As a result, the differences between regions at the turn of the century are not as striking as in the early 1980s, and an "upset" in the geographical distribution of Italian fertility has occurred (Figure 4, parts *a* and *b*). Behaviors already noted in the Centre-North (late age at marriage; longer intervals between marriage and first birth and between the following births; declining proportions of women with three or more children) occur as well in the South, but 10-15 years later. Also similar to past few decades in Centre-North, the changes taking place in the South are not accompanied by an increase in cohabitation or out-of-wedlock births. Thus, southern regions may be experiencing analogous behaviors to what have already happened in the North, interpretable by way of postponement factors. On the other hand, as we will discuss below, this interpretation may be a bit hasty and incomplete.

[TABLES 10-11 AND FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE]

We now focus on several possible interpretations for the increase in fertility rates in the Centre and North of Italy. Although not mutually exclusive, we formulate four hypotheses.

[5] Indeed, the rapid decrease in the number of Italian women of childbearing age reached its lowest point in the first decade of the new century. In the beginning of 2004, women aged 15-19 resident in Italy numbered 1,400 thousand, while those 40-44 numbered 2,200 thousand.

(1) *Postponement effect.* The general upturn of fertility levels after 1998 may be a combination of the ending of fertility decline among the younger age groups, and the increase of fertility rates in the older age groups.

(2) *Fertility rates of foreigners*. The striking increase of the foreign population living in Italy in the last twenty years is an absolutely new phenomenon. In 1986, the number of foreigners living in Italy was in the tens of thousands, by mid-2006, their number had increased to three and a half million. This group is largely made up of individuals of adult age or infants. If the fertility of foreigners was higher than that of Italians, then the recent escalation of immigration may have generally pushed fertility rates higher.

(3) *New marital behaviors.* Fertility may be higher in those areas in which behaviors such as cohabitation, out-of-wedlock births, and separations are more widespread. This would follow the pattern of many other European countries.

(4) *A more favorable context for procreation.* The lowest-low fertility may be the result of a set of constraints, mainly lack of money and time for children. If these bonds are relaxed, thus fertility may increase.

4.2. THE FIRST HYPOTHESIS: THE RISE OF FERTILITY RATES IN OLDER AGE GROUPS

The sharp decline in fertility beginning in the mid-1970s was in part caused by the increasingly high mean age at first birth, and the ever more lengthy intervals between the following births (Castiglioni and Dalla Zuanna, 1994). Both of these behaviors have characterized more or less all of the western countries, resulting in a rapid lowering of fertility rates in the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s and a swift rise in the age of the mother at birth (Frejka and Calot, 2001; Sobotka, 2004). Over the 15 years which followed, cohorts in several coun-

tries (mostly in Northern Europe) recovered almost completely the fertility rates which had decreased in the 15-29 age groups, thanks to the increased fertility rates of women over 30. This translated into a rise in period fertility rates in the 1990s. In other countries, such as Italy, the increase in fertility rates in the older age groups was lower than the decline of fertility rates in the younger ages (see Calot and Frejka's quoted article for an emblematic comparison between Italy and Norway). If, in Italy, the decrease of fertility rates in the first phases of a woman's fertility life has finally ended, or at least slowed, then the upturn of fertility rates in the Centre and North of Italy after 1995 may be a reflection of the movement towards increased fertility rates in the older age groups. This does not necessarily mean that the final fertility of the cohorts born after 1960 will increase.

Unfortunately, we do not have access to complete and detailed information for cohorts, age and birth order after 1996, as the secular national collection of births data was cancelled in Italy. No reconstruction has been produced in order to estimate cohort fertility by birth order from new documentary material. In order to consider our hypothesis, we use only those data available for period fertility by age (table 12).

[TABLE 12 ABOUT HERE]

If we observe data only on a national level, it would seem that in the decade 1993-2003 the timing of fertility simply "readjusted," given that the mean number of children per woman remained more or less constant while the mean age at birth rose 1.4 years. In fact 60% of births in 2003 were from women older than 30 years of age, compared to only 30% in the cohorts of their mothers. This result however, is deceiving, in that it combines very different behaviors between women resident in the Centre-North and those in the South. For comparative purposes we examine more closely two regions, Emilia-Romagna and Sicilia, where the phenomena we want to highlight are particularly evident (see again, table 12).

Up until 2003, in Sicilia births were postponed. The decline in fertility rates in the decade under consideration was the result of a sharp decrease in the fertility rates of young

women not compensated by an increase in fertility rates of women over 30. Although a bit delayed, Sicilia seemed to follow the path already traveled by Emilia-Romagna, but without ever reaching such very low levels of fertility. The shifting of “fertility” towards later ages has similarly occurred in all of the southern regions, but in contrast to Sicilia, fertility levels have been even lower (with exception of the countryside provinces of Naples and Caserta).

In Emilia-Romagna, on the other hand, fertility remained at very low levels (even lower than one child per woman) throughout the 1980s and into the early 1990s. During this same period, births were progressively more common at older ages. By 1995, more that half of the mothers giving birth were older than 30. In the decade under consideration, the situation changed. For all of the age groups, fertility rates were higher in 2003 than in 1993. The increase in fertility rates was particularly intense at higher ages. For women over 35, the fertility rate in 2003 was almost double that of 10 years early, and three times that of 1983. It is therefore correct to affirm that the cohorts born in the 1960s, after having had very few children when they were between the ages of 15-30, recovered, at least in part, for time lost. In addition, for the women born in the 1970s, the aging of the fertility calendar seems to have come to a halt. Compared to 1993, fertility rates in 2003 increased for the first three age groups. However, it is still too early to tell if these women (who were 24-33 years of age in 2003) will have more children than the cohorts who were born in the preceding decade.

These data show that (1) Very low fertility during the period 1980-95 was caused by a combination of “missing children” from two age groups. The first being those women born in the 1940s and 1950s who had very few children at older ages (they got married at 23-24 years of age, the earliest average age throughout the 20th century). The second group composed of those women born in the 1960s who did not have children at young ages; (2) The upturn of fertility rates in Emilia-Romagna in 1995-2004 is due both to the slight increase of fertility rates for women of younger ages (the cohorts born in the 1970s) and to the rising fertility rates for the older age groups (for the cohorts born in the 1960s).

From the data presented in table 12, we can estimate that the women in Emilia-Romagna born around the mid-1960s will, on average, have about 1.3 children[6]. Although this is a low number, it is still 30% higher than the period fertility rates recorded when these same women were experiencing the first part of their reproductive lives. It is also higher than the cohort estimate predicted by ISTAT in population forecasts. In the comparison between Norway and Italy, proposed by Calot and Frejka (2001), the 1960s Italian cohorts seemed incapable of compensate for the lack of children born in their youth with births in the later half of their reproductive lives. However, their comparison may be weakened by the very use of this type of projection. In reality, changes occurred in the decade under consideration demonstrate that the "recovery" effect did indeed have a certain impact, even if was somewhat hidden by the differences in behavior between the Centre-North and the South.

4.3. THE SECOND HYPOTHESIS: FOREIGN FERTILITY CONTRIBUTIONS

Between 1996 and 2004, the number of children born of foreign parents rose from 11 to 49 thousand (table 13). Consequently, the increase in the total number of births during the last decade is due to the births of foreigners, as the number of Italian births has remained more or less constant. If we consider fertility rates, however, then the picture slightly changes. Fertility rates for Italian women have risen as their numbers have decreased. From 1996 to 2004 the number of Italian women aged 18-49 resident in Italy went from 13,300 thousand to 12,100 thousand. Half of these "missing women" were "replaced" by new foreign female citizens, who in the same time period increased in number from 250 to 850 thousand. Foreigners tend to have higher fertility than native Italians, meaning that they push general fertility levels higher.

[6] The estimate of the fertility rate for the 1964-68 cohorts in Emilia-Romagna was calculated as follows: [13.2 + (61.8+28.0)/2 + 67.0 + (63.8+84.7)/2 + 47.3 + 9.2 + 0.4] x 5 / 1000 = 1.28 (see table 12).

[TABLE 13 ABOUT HERE]

On the other hand, the number of foreign women living in Italy remains relatively low – less than a tenth of the total of women of reproductive age in 2004. In addition, their fertility is not very high, estimated at about 1.8 children per woman in the five year period between 2000 and 2004. Thus it is only in small part that foreign women have actually contributed to the recent upturn in Italian fertility rates. Furthermore, almost all of the births of foreign women took place in the Centre-North, as in the South there were much fewer women immigrants and these women tended to have rather low fertility rates, because most of them are not yet stabilized (figure 4, part *c*).

These considerations, however, do not exclude the possibility that in a few areas, the influence of higher foreign fertility rates may have had greater significance. Magherini and Mencarini (2001) show that for the three year period 1998-2000, the total fertility rate in Florence (TFR=1.02) would have been 8% lower without the contribution of foreign women. In this period, these women gave birth to 18% of the infants resident in Florence, with a TFR of 1.7 children per woman leading the authors to argue that the increase in fertility in Florence (+12% of the TFR with respect to the preceding three year period) was in good part due to increased fertility and number of foreign women.

4.4 THE THIRD HYPOTHESIS: FERTILITY AND NEW MARITAL BEHAVIORS

Dalla Zuanna and Righi (1999, 30-31) constructed an indicator for diffusion of new marital and reproductive behaviors for eighteen western European countries. They compared this indicator with fertility levels at the beginning of the 1990s and found a linear correlation of 0.93: the more widespread the new behaviors, the higher the fertility levels. This territorial regularity may also be present within Italy. In some areas higher fertility coexists with more widespread cohabitations and births out-of-wedlock (figure 4, see part *b* and *d*).

In the absence of any recent analysis which covers the entire national territory, we may use the investigation conducted in the late 1990s on Milan, which provides several noteworthy aspects to consider (De Sandre and Ongaro, 2000). Milan is both the most populated city in northern Italy (with 1,300 thousand inhabitants at the end of 2004) and the most economically dynamic. By the 1990s, new marital behaviors were already quite widespread. More than 40% of the first marriages of women born in 1965-1974 were preceded by cohabitation, compared to less than 20% for those women born in the 1950s. Moreover, during 1995-99, 52% of first unions were cohabitations. However, the increase of cohabitations throughout the 1990s was not accompanied by a similar augmentation in out-of-wedlock births, but rather by an accelerated move towards marriage and to legitimate births. This rapid shift towards marriage was facilitated by a younger age (of about a year) for first cohabitating unions than for first unions by marriage. By 2004, fertility levels were at 1.46 children per woman, or 70% higher than the fertility rate in the mid-1980s. Fertility had increased for all ages, similar to fertility trends observed in Emilia-Romagna from 1993 to 2003.

It is difficult to tell if Milan at the middle of 1990s was forerunner of what is now happening in all of the Centre and North of Italy. In any case, observation of behavior in Milan allows us to argue that also in Italy a relatively high fertility can coexist, and indeed may be favored by, very different marital choices than those made in the recent past.

4.5. THE FOURTH HYPOTHESIS: A MORE FAVORABLE CONTEXT FOR PROCREATION

In order to test – albeit only partially – this hypothesis, we should observe if some constraints to procreation have diminished since the middle of the 1990s, and if people involved in this change have increased fertility.

First of all, we observe if fertility rates increased more rapidly in the richer and more dynamic areas of the Centre-North. This analysis is of particular interest in that during the 1990s, the development rates of income in the provinces of the Centre-North (measured by

current prices) were widely different[7]. As one can observe in the last graph in figure 5, fertility rates rose mainly in the richest and most economically dynamic provinces. However, we cannot distinguish if this is a "pure" effect, as the richest and most dynamic areas are also the same places where new marital behaviors are most widespread, which attract the highest number of foreign immigrants, and where fertility rates in the past where the lowest. In addition, beginning in the late 1990s, several national and local administrative measures economically favorable to families with children were approved, even if these certainly are not comparable to the more extensive policies already adopted in other European countries[8]. Billari et al. (2005) have shown how recent national political programs have had a statistically significant impact on the propensity of couples to have a third child in poor families. These policies, however, seem to have had very little impact on the absolute number of births.

Another important factor pushing down fertility in Italy in the past decades was the decrease of time for childcare available for Italian women (McDonald, 2000). Some micro-analyses suggest that in situations in which both partners work, and the man does not leave the running of the house and childcare to the woman alone, the probability of having a second or third child is significantly higher (Mencarini and Tanturri, 2004). Since the proportion of partners sharing housework and childcare is increasing, in recent years this constraint may become less important.

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[7] The increase of the annual *pro-capite* income ranged from +7% for a few of the provinces in the North-East (i.e. Gorizia, Treviso, Verona, Vicenza, and Bolzano) to below +4% for the provinces of Belluno (Veneto), Genova and Imperia (Liguria), and Livorno (Toscana). Even income level, at the end of the 1990s, was quite variable: from 51 million lire annually *pro-capite* in Milan to slightly more than 26 million in Massa Carrara (Toscana).

[8] The most important of these legal measures was the decision to give a monetary contribution to those families with at least three children under the age of 18 and below a certain income level. Since 1999, the sum of 120 euros a month is to be given to the family for every child - from the fourth born on. For a detailed analysis of the political measures in favor of families with children conducted on a national and regional level, see the internet site: www.politichefamiliari.stat.unipd.it.

4.6. A JOINT ANALYSIS OF THE FOUR EFFECTS ON FERTILITY

In order to distinguish the importance of each of the four effects on fertility (linked to each of our four hypotheses), we follow a procedure which has been previously employed in various territorial studies of Italian fertility (see for example, Livi Bacci, 1977; Dalla Zuanna and Righi, 1999). We applied a multiple linear regression model, using as statistical units the 63 Italian provinces of the Centre-North. We excluded, however the provinces of Lazio, where fertility continued to decline into the late 20th century, although we did include the province of Rome where, on the other hand, fertility levels have increased The dependent variable is the upturn of fertility between 1986-1995 and 1996-00. We calculated four measurements of the explicative hypotheses discussed up to this point. Before being inserted into the model, the four indicators were standardized (mean 0 and variance 1), in order to make the *beta* regression coefficients comparable (figure 5 and table 14).

The four indicators are all statistically associated with the increase of fertility at the end of the century and agree with the hypotheses suggested above. All four maintain a significant association, even if put in "competition" with one another fitting is satisfying: $\mathbf{R^2}$ corrected = 0.59).

[FIGURE 5 AND TABLE 14 ABOUT HERE]

5. Conclusion

Starting with the close of the 20th century, the gap between Italy and central and northern European countries with regard to marital and reproductive behaviors has consistently narrowed. Cohabitation and marital dissolutions occur ever more commonly, a growing number of children are born out-of-wedlock, and fertility rates are increasing. This does not signify however, that a few particular Italian characteristics have disappeared. In fact, even in the

regions where many couples live together, the very late age at leaving the parental home means that cohabitations do not involve many youth (15-24) but rather young adults (25-34 and older). Thus, in the next few years in Italy, the general diffusion of cohabitations and out-of-wedlock births may very well be accompanied by a prolonged stay in the parental home.

With regard specifically to *cohabitations*, Italy, in spite of a delay of 20-25 years, has begun imitate other European countries. This postponement was probably caused by generations of parents born before the Second World War, who opposed and refused to accept this new behavior on the part of their children. The number of *marital dissolutions* has rapidly been increasing, but at the beginning of the new century, the mean national level is still far from those numbers observed in countries such as the USA, the UK and France. The probability of separation by marriage duration (constant between the 5th and the 25th anniversary), is closer to that observed in the three countries above when separations there were at the same level of Italy.

Italy's very low *fertility* rates have also begun to change. The upturn in fertility rates has been most felt in the Centre-North areas, where the TFR went from 1.1 children per woman in 1995 to 1.4 ten years later. These are more economically dynamic areas, where a widespread presence of foreigners is felt, where new marital behaviors rapidly diffuse, and where fertility declined to the lowest rates in the preceding years. In the South, on the other hand, fertility decline has not come to a halt, although the pace of the decrease in fertility rates seems to have slowed before reaching the very low levels experienced in the Centre-North at the close of the 1980s. It is too early to tell if a decisive inversion in reproductive behavior has occurred among the cohorts. However, in several regions and in the big cities, one can observe an increase in the fertility rates of women aged 20-29. It may be that beginning in the second half of the 1990s, conditions in Italy became more favorable to having children, and that these conditions translated into an upturn of fertility that cannot be defined solely as a "mechanical" recovery of fertility unplaced in the preceding decade.

The study of territorial differences of marital and reproductive behaviors in Italy offers an understanding of a few of their determinants[9]. A geographical perspective of marital separations, of the diffusion of cohabitations, and of out-of-wedlock births, overlaps closely with the great decline in births in the first half of the 20th century; which in turn replicated territorial differences noticeable in the diffusion processes of scolarization, industrialization and (above all) secularization. Despite some locally relevant exceptions, and the slight diminishment in the last decade of interregional differences, territorial continuity over time remains a predominant characteristic of the Italian marital and reproductive behaviour.

[9] The Italian regions are often too vast for this type of analysis. For example, Lombardia may be divided into (at least) two parts. The two eastern provinces of Bergamo and Brescia were part of the Republic of Venice up until 1797 and as a result are much less secularized. The other provinces are characterized by behaviors more similar to those of Piemonte and Liguria.

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TABLES

Table 1. Proportion of unmarried women and men at specific ages in different Italian areas. The year 2004 is compared to 1991 and 1981

January 1, 2005	*% unmarried women at age 30*	*% unmarried men at age 35*
Centre-North	48	42
South	39	33
Italy	45	39
November 1991, Italy	23	21
November 1981, Italy	14	13

Sources. For 2004: ISTAT, demographic statistics (www.demo.istat.it). For 1981 and 1991: Census data.

Table 2. Residence of Italian youth born in 1966-70 and 1976-80 at several exact ages

% of column	age 20		age 25		age 30	age 35
Men	1966-70	1976-80	1966-70	1976-78	1966-70	1966-68
Parents	87	82	68	63	34	16
Alone or with friends	11	13	18	23	14	10
Live with partner	1	2	4	5	8	9
Married	1	3	10	9	45	65
Total	100 *(767)*	100 *(758)*	100 *(767)*	100 *(483)*	100 *(767)*	100 *(447)*
% at least 1 cohabitation	0.8	1.3	5.0	8.5	9.3	---
Women						
Parents	87	81	55	52	21	12
Alone or with friends	7	10	12	15	10	9
Live with partner	1	4	3	4	8	9
Married	5	5	30	29	62	70
Total	100 *(766)*	100 *(792)*	100 *(766)*	100 *(480)*	100 *(766)*	100 *(408)*
% at least 1 cohabitation	0.9	2.3	3.8	6.6	8.1	---

Source: IDEA survey (Entrance of Youth into Adulthood). Sample is statistically representative of Italian citizens resident in Italy who were born in 1966-70 and in 1976-80 and interviewed in 2003 (Mazzuco et al. 2006)

Table 3. Proportion of Italian women who have cohabited at least once at several exact age, by year of birth and area of residence. Values are in percentage

	Year of birth			
	1974-78	1969-73	1964-68	1959-63
Birthday		Italy		
25	9.4	6.4	5.0	4.3
30	---	13.1	9.3	7.5
35	---	---	13.7	9.7
40	---	---	---	11.2
		Centre-North		
25	12.7	7.8	5.3	4.4
30	---	17.3	11.7	9.0
35	---	---	17.9	12.2
40	---	---	---	14.1
		South		
25	4.9	4.5	4.6	4.2
30	---	7.1	5.9	5.2
35	---	---	7.7	5.9
40	---	---	---	6.9

Source: Our elaborations on the micro data from Istat 2003 Survey: "Family and Social Subjects"

Table 4. Proportion of marriages preceded by cohabitation and proportion of out-of-wedlock births in the different Italian regions

	% marriages preceded by cohabitation (by year of wedding)			% out-of-wedlock births		
	1979-83	1989-93	1999-2003	1984	1994	2004
Centre-North						
Piemonte	9	16	30	6.8	9.7	19.5
Valle d'Aosta	---	---	---	9.2	13.8	22.9
Lombardia	7	9	28	5.3	8.4	17.7
Trentino – Alto Adige	11	25	39	9.7	13.5	25.1
Veneto	4	17	34	3.6	6.2	15.3
Friuli – Venezia Giulia	3	28	42	6.9	11.0	18.4
Liguria	6	9	27	8.2	11.5	24.7
Emilia – Romagna	5	12	16	7.0	12.3	25.6
Toscana	3	13	29	5.2	9.1	23.2
Umbria	6	5	13	2.8	5.8	14.8
Marche	3	12	18	2.4	4.7	13.0
Lazio	4	9	20	5.9	9.7	12.7
South						
Abruzzo	0	10	6	2.7	3.6	8.9
Molise	5	2	6	1.9	2.5	4.8
Campania	1	8	4	3.4	4.6	7.6
Puglia	7	12	5	4.5	6.6	9.1
Basilicata	0	0	7	2.0	2.3	4.1
Calabria	5	7	6	2.8	3.6	5.9
Sicilia	11	8	22	6.1	8.6	10.8
Sardegna	2	10	34	5.4	8.1	15.9
Centre-North	6	14	27	5.6	9.1	19.4
South	4	8	12	4.3	6.0	8.4
ITALY	5	11	22	5.0	7.7	14.9

Source: The first three columns: our elaborations on the micro data from Istat 2003 Survey: "Family and Social Subjects". The last three columns: the Italian Statistical Yearbook (The 1985, 1995 and 2005 editions)

Table 5. Living arrangements of youth aged 25-29 (born in 1967-71), resident in Australia in 1996, by place of birth of both parents

	Women (row %)				Men (row %)			
	Parent's home	Married	Cohabit	Alone or with friends	Parent's home	Married	Cohabit	Alone or with friends
Australia	12	54	22	12	10	48	29	13
UK	11	54	25	11	16	37	32	15
Ireland	9	59	25	7	17	31	33	19
New Zealand	10	40	35	15	15	27	40	18
Netherlands	19	42	18	21	17	49	20	14
Germany	16	50	24	10	22	35	27	16
Hungary	19	47	22	12	28	31	25	16
Poland	21	48	17	14	32	30	25	13
Italy	30	61	2	7	41	45	6	8
Malta	17	71	6	6	30	50	11	9
Greece	38	56	1	5	43	48	3	6
Lebanon	33	64	0	3	48	45	2	5
Croatia	33	49	9	9	47	32	11	10
Macedonia	50	42	1	7	49	40	6	5
India	24	46	19	11	36	29	23	12
China	47	39	6	8	39	26	23	12

Source: Khoo et al., 2002, pp. 119-141

Table 6. Attitudes towards cohabitation. Young Italians, ages 15-24

Year of Survey	1983	1987	1992	1996	2000
Date of birth of youth	1959-68	1963-72	1968-73	1972-81	1976-85
Date of birth of parents	1929-38	1933-42	1938-47	1942-51	1946-55
% that considers cohabitation to be admissible	76	79	78	84	87
% that not exclude the possibility of cohabiting themselves	65	65	66	73	80
% that considers cohabitation to be accepted by society	36	38	43	47	66

Sources: various years of the IARD surveys on statistically representative samples of Italian youth. For bibliographic reference, see Buzzi et al. 2002

Table 7. Marriages and legal separations in Italy (thousands). 1970-2003

	1970	1980	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Marriages	396	323	320	290	279	278	280	280	284	264	270	259
Separations	7	29	44	52	58	60	63	65	72	76	80	82

Source: ISTAT, Italian Statistical Yearbooks

Table 8. Surviving marriages in the separation life-tables by cohorts of marriage, up to exact durations. Marriages celebrated in the USA, the UK, France, Japan and Italy

marriage	Italy (the data in italics were estimated)								
Cohort	0	5	10	15	20	25	30		
1969-73	100	99	97	95	94	92	91		
1974-78	100	98	96	94	92	90			
1979-83	100	98	95	92	89	*87*			
1984-88	100	98	94	90	*86*	*82*			
1989-93	100	97	92	*86*	*81*	*76*			
1994-98	100	96	*90*	*82*	*75*	*69*			
	USA (women, first marriage)								
	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
1945-49	100	95	90	86	81	75	70	65	59
1950-54	100	95	89	83	77	72	66	61	56
1955-59	100	95	88	79	72	66	62	58	
1960-64	100	93	82	72	64	59	55		
1965-69	100	90	76	65	59	54			
1970-74	100	87	71	62	56				
1975-79	100	85	70	61					
1980-84	100	86	73						
1985-89	100	86							
	United Kingdom								
	0	5	10	15	20	25	30		
1959-63	100	99	94	88	83	79	77		
1964-68	100	98	89	82	77	74	71		
1969-73	100	95	85	78	73	70	68		
1974-78	100	93	81	74	69	65			
1979-83	100	91	79	71	66				
1984-88	100	90	77	69					
1989-93	100	89	76						
1994-98	100	89							
	France								
	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
1960	100	99	96	93	91	89	87	85	84
1965	100	98	95	91	88	85	82	81	
1970	100	98	92	87	83	80	77		
1975	100	96	89	84	79	75			
1980	100	96	88	82	77				
1985	100	96	87	80					
1990	100	94	84						
1995	100	95							
	Japan								
	0	5	10	15	20				
1980	100	93	88	86	83				
1985	100	92	86	83					
1990	100	89	83						
1995	100	87							

Sources: Italy: ISTAT (The Italian National Statistics Institute), several editions of Demographic Yearbooks; USA: Kreider R.M. and Fields J.M., 2002; UK: www.statistics.gov.uk accessed in Spring 2006; France: Prioux F., 2005; Japan: Raymo, Iwasawa and Bumpass, 2005

Table 9. Estimate of the proportion of marriages ending in legal separation before their 20th anniversary (%), by year of marriage and region. Marriages celebrated in Italy in 1973-98 [1]

	1973	1978	1983	1988	1993	1998	1998 / 1978	Ref [2]	Coh [3]	Out [4]
Piemonte	8 [(1)]	16	20	23	28	40	2.50	71	30	20
Valle D'Aosta	8	21	22	34	40	42	2.00	75	30	23
Lombardia	6	13	17	19	25	34	2.62	60	28	18
Trentino-Alto Adige	5	11	13	17	23	30	2.73	49	39	25
Veneto	4	8	11	11	22	25	3.13	49	34	15
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	7	13	16	32	31	40	3.08	64	42	18
Liguria	10	18	24	25	31	46	2.56	73	27	25
Emilia-Romagna	6	14	23	25	31	42	3.00	71	16	26
Toscana	5	11	16	20	28	40	3.64	70	29	23
Umbria	2	8	11	15	25	31	3.88	67	13	15
Marche	2	6	8	13	17	28	4.67	58	18	13
Lazio	7	16	15	21	26	42	2.63	63	20	13
Abruzzo	2	5	5	7	18	25	5.00	51	6	9
Molise	1	2	3	5	11	18	9.00	40	6	5
Campania	3	5	6	7	11	15	3.00	48	4	8
Puglia	2	4	5	8	11	14	3.50	47	5	9
Basilicata	1	3	3	4	9	10	3.33	46	7	4
Calabria	1	3	5	5	8	11	3.67	49	6	6
Sicilia	3	5	7	8	12	17	3.40	51	22	11
Sardegna	1	5	8	10	15	21	4.20	55	34	16
Italy (Mean)	5	10	12	15	20	27	2.70	59	22	15
Variation coefficient [5]	0.56	0.57	0.57	0.61	0.46	0.44	0.28	0.18	0.56	0.47
Linear correlation with divorce in 1998	0.87	0.92	0.92	0.91	0.95	1.00	–0.45	0.89	0.60	0.84

[1] For example: 100 x ($_{1976,\ 1977,\ 1978}$ Separations $_{Piemonte}$ / $_{1973}$ Marriages $_{Piemonte}$) / 3 = 8

[2] Ref = Votes in favor of divorce in the 1974 referendum (%) – Source: ISTAT, electoral statistics.

[3] Coh = Marriages celebrated in 1999-2003 with a previous period of cohabitation (%) – Source: Our elaborations on the micro data from Istat 2003 Survey: "Family and Social Subjects"

[4] Out = Proportion of out-of-wedlock births in 2004 (%) – Source: ISTAT Statistical Yearbook 2005

[5] σ/Mean

Table 10. Births, women aged 20-39, and TFR estimates in Italy in 1990-2004. Births and Women are expressed in thousands

	1990	*1992*	*1994*	*1996*	*1998*	*2000*	*2002*	*2004*	*2005*
Births (x 1,000)	569	568	533	528	515	543	538	563	554
W 20-39 (x 1,000)	8,487	8,622	8,750	8,806	8,757	8,610	8,427	8,243	8,190
TFR [(1)]	1.34	1.32	1.22	1.20	1.18	1.26	1.28	1.37	1.34

[(1)] *Total Fertility Rate, the mean number of children per woman, calculated as Births/W (20-39) x 20*

Table 11. Fertility rates in the Italian regions during the period 1981-2004

	1980-1982	1983-1985	1986-1988	1989-1991	1992-94 (A)	1995-1997	1998-2000	2001-2003	2004-05 (B)	(B – A) / (A)
Piemonte	1.30	1.17	1.09	1.10	1.08	1.08	1.15	1.19	1.27	18%
Valle d'Aosta	1.21	1.17	1.12	1.10	1.07	1.10	1.23	1.25	1.34	25%
Lombardia	1.37	1.23	1.13	1.13	1.11	1.12	1.21	1.25	1.35	22%
Liguria	1.10	1.02	0.98	1.01	0.99	0.97	1.03	1.09	1.19	20%
Trentino-AA	1.64	1.49	1.39	1.40	1.38	1.40	1.46	1.46	1.54	12%
Veneto	1.41	1.27	1.16	1.16	1.13	1.14	1.22	1.23	1.35	19%
Friuli-VG	1.19	1.09	1.01	1.04	1.00	1.01	1.10	1.13	1.22	22%
Emilia-Romagna	1.18	1.07	0.99	1.02	1.00	1.02	1.13	1.23	1.33	33%
Marche	1.51	1.36	1.25	1.24	1.18	1.14	1.19	1.20	1.27	8%
Toscana	1.27	1.15	1.08	1.09	1.04	1.03	1.10	1.16	1.31	26%
Umbria	1.44	1.33	1.21	1.18	1.12	1.08	1.13	1.21	1.27	13%
Lazio	1.49	1.35	1.24	1.24	1.19	1.14	1.21	1.21	1.28	8%
Abruzzo	1.77	1.60	1.43	1.39	1.32	1.20	1.17	1.17	1.20	-9%
Molise	1.92	1.72	1.56	1.48	1.37	1.22	1.18	1.14	1.14	-17%
Campania	2.32	2.10	1.91	1.85	1.70	1.54	1.49	1.48	1.45	-15%
Puglia	2.13	1.89	1.74	1.66	1.54	1.38	1.33	1.31	1.30	-16%
Basilicata	2.12	1.91	1.71	1.63	1.45	1.28	1.24	1.22	1.19	-18%
Calabria	2.28	2.06	1.89	1.75	1.57	1.38	1.28	1.24	1.25	-20%
Sicilia	2.11	1.94	1.83	1.78	1.69	1.53	1.42	1.41	1.42	-16%
Sardegna	1.91	1.67	1.46	1.36	1.19	1.07	1.04	1.04	1.04	-13%
Variat. Coefficent	*0.25*	*0.24*	*0.23*	*0.21*	*0.19*	*0.14*	*0.11*	*0.09*	0.09	---

Sources: Years 1980-96: Istat (1997b, 2000); following years: www.demo.istat.it, accessed in February 2006. The data given for 2005 are provisory.

Table 12. Age specific fertility rates (x 1,000), mean number of children per woman, and mean age at birth in 1973, 1983, 1993 and 2003 – Italy, Emilia-Romagna, and Sicilia

	Italy			
	1973	*1983*	*1993*	*2003*
15-19	31.4	15.8	7.4	6.7
20-24	131.6	87.2	44.6	31.8
25-29	150.0	107.2	89.2	72.2
30-34	93.0	65.6	74.4	89.1
35-39	46.0	25.6	31.0	47.7
40-44	14.6	5.4	5.8	9.2
45-49	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.4
TFR	*2.34*	*1.54*	*1.26*	*1.28*
MAB	*27.9*	*27.7*	*29.4*	*30.8*
% 30+	33%	32%	44%	57%

	Emilia-Romagna				*Sicilia*			
	1973	*1983*	*1993*	*2003*	*1973*	*1983*	*1993*	*2003*
15-19	35.0	13.2	5.0	5.6	54.2	32.6	19.2	13.0
20-24	120.2	61.8	28.0	33.1	146.4	120.2	80.8	45.5
25-29	119.0	75.2	67.0	68.2	160.4	122.2	110.8	86.8
30-34	68.4	46.0	63.8	84.7	108.2	78.8	80.6	87.2
35-39	30.6	16.2	25.6	47.3	58.8	33.4	35.2	41.8
40-44	7.8	2.8	4.4	9.2	20.2	7.8	7.0	8.9
45-49	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.5
TFR	*1.91*	*1.08*	*0.97*	*1.24*	*2.75*	*1.98*	*1.67*	*1.42*
MAB	*27.0*	*27.5*	*29.8*	*30.8*	*27.8*	*27.3*	*28.3*	*29.8*
% 30+	28%	30%	48%	57%	34%	30%	37%	49%

TFR: Total Fertility Rate (mean number of children per woman)
MAB: Mean Age at Birth (estimated by age specific rates)

Sources: Years 1973-93: Istat (1997b). Year 2003: Istat processing of vital statistics data (see www.demo.istat.it accessed February 20, 2006)

Table 13. Fertility rates of Italian and foreign women resident in Italy. 1996-2000

		Births (thousands)			*% births*	*Estimate of TFR (*)*		
		Italians	*Foreigners*	*Total*	*foreigners*	*Italians*	*Foreigners*	*Total*
Italy	*1996*	517	11	528	2.0%	1.25	1.38	1.25
	2000	517	26	543	4.8%	1.31	1.83	1.31
	2004	511	49	560	8.7%	1.35	1.77	1.39
Centre-North 2004		309	45	354	12.7%	1.35	1.91	1.39
South 2004		202	4	206	1.9%	1.39	0.99	1.39

(*): (Births/Women 18-49) x 32. According to data on permits of stay, at the beginning of 2004 there were 775,000 foreign women aged 18-49 living in the Centre-North and 129,000 living in the South.

Sources: The age structure of foreign women was deduced from permits of stay, other information comes from population registers. All data were from the internet site www.demo.istat.it accessed in February 2006.

Table 14. Multiple regression analysis between the variation in fertility at the end of the century and the four indicators linked to the four hypotheses. Italian provinces of the Centre-North

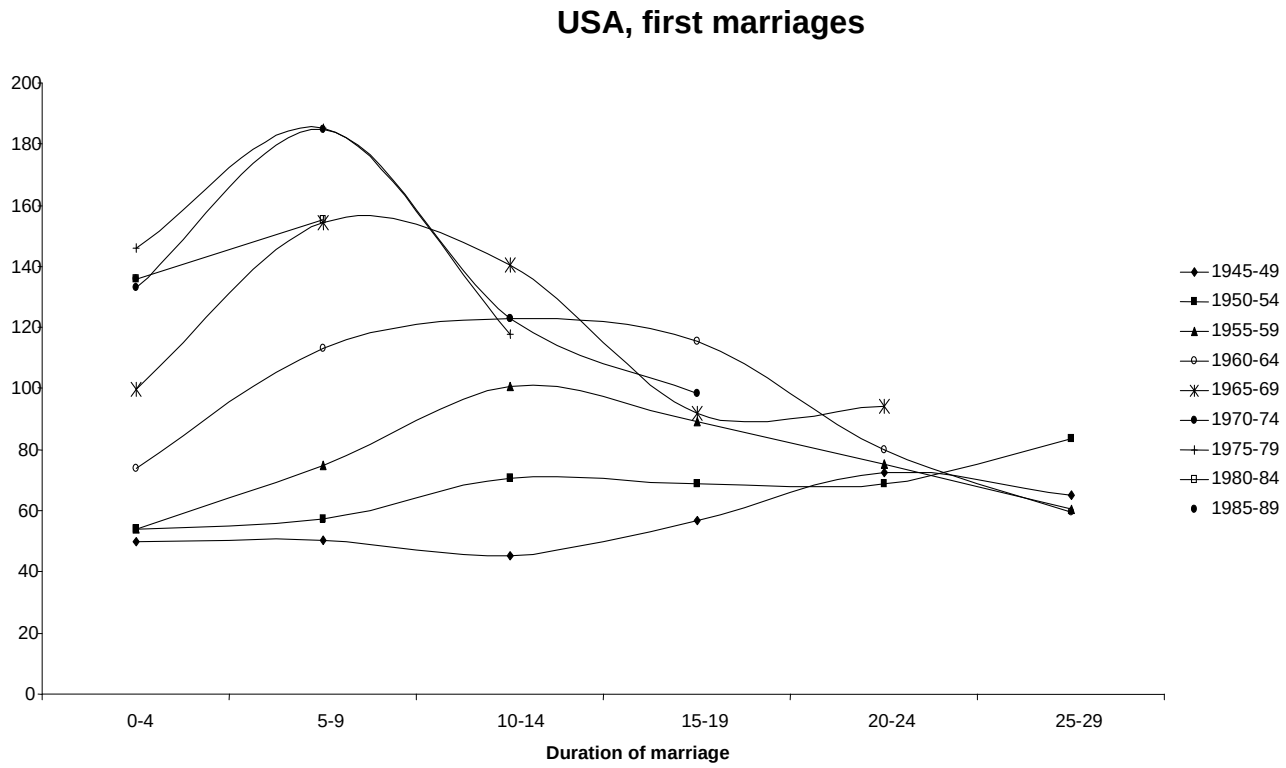
	Beta	*Significance*
(a) Fertility 1986-95	-0.227	0.03
(b) Foreigners	0.335	0.00
(c) New Transition	0.257	0.01
(d) Income	0.471	0.00

R^2 corrected: 0.56
For the meaning of each indicator, see figure 5

FIGURES

Figure 1. The regions of Italy

Figure 2. Probability of marriage dissolution by marriage cohorts: USA, UK, France, Japan and Italy



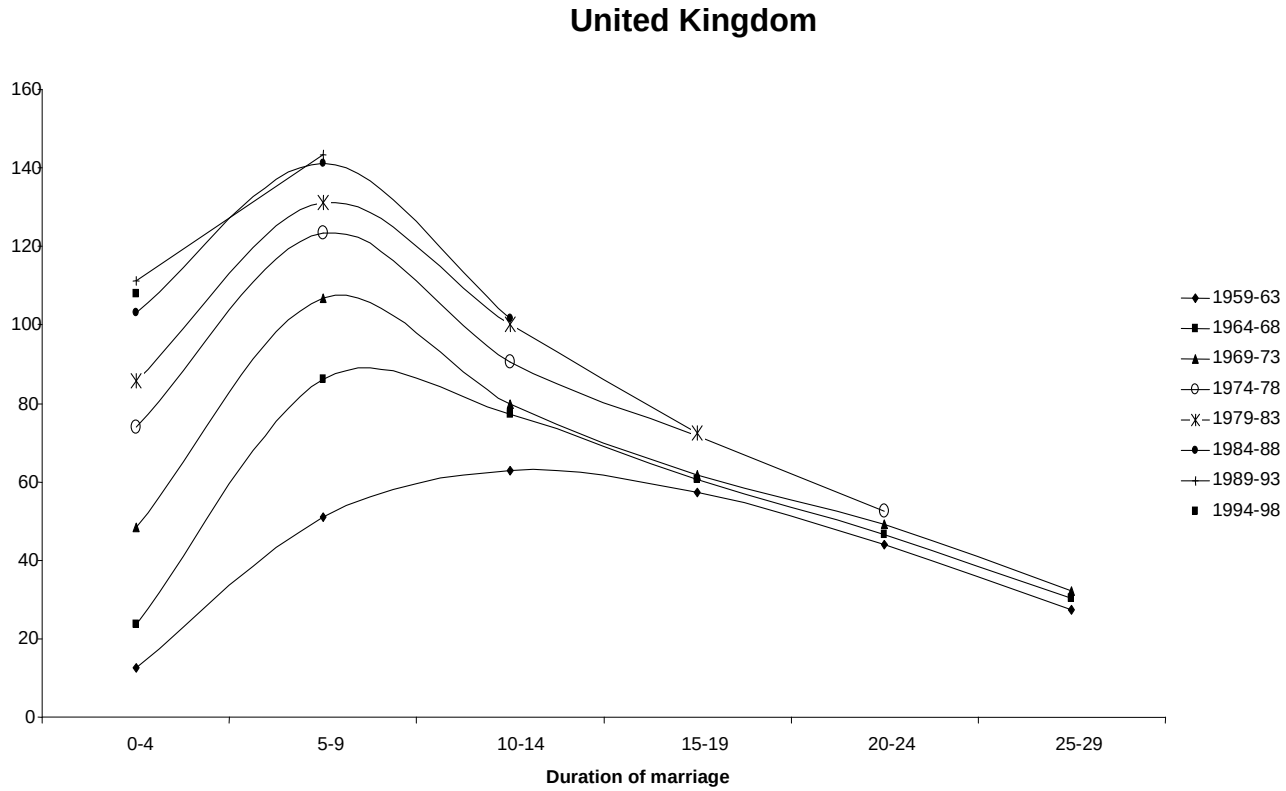
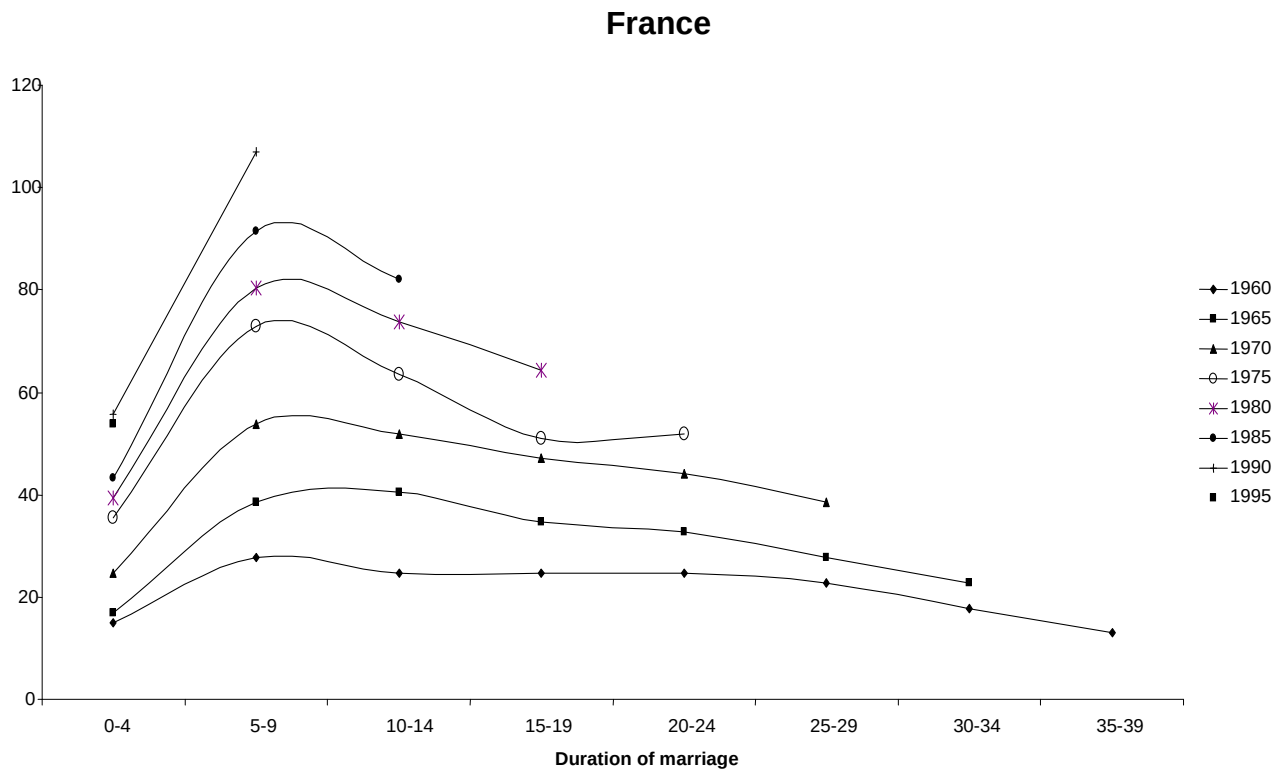


Figure 2. (Continued)



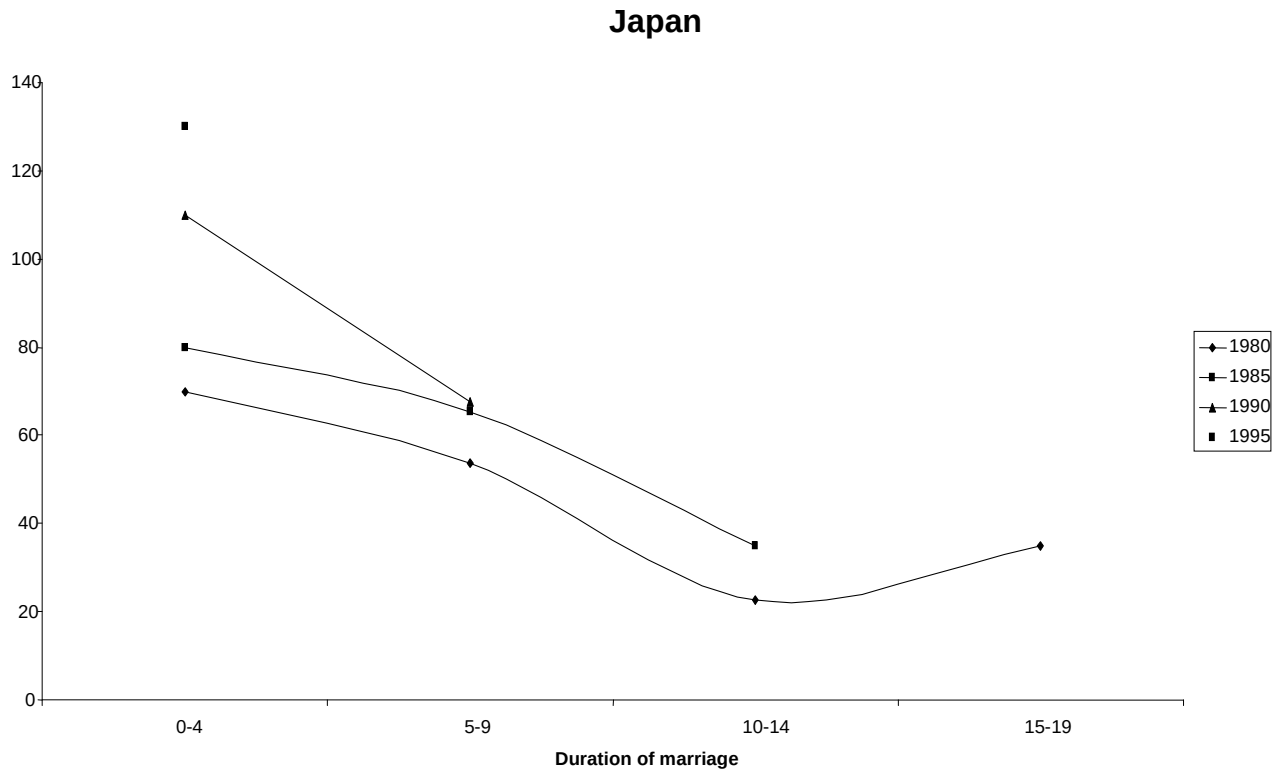
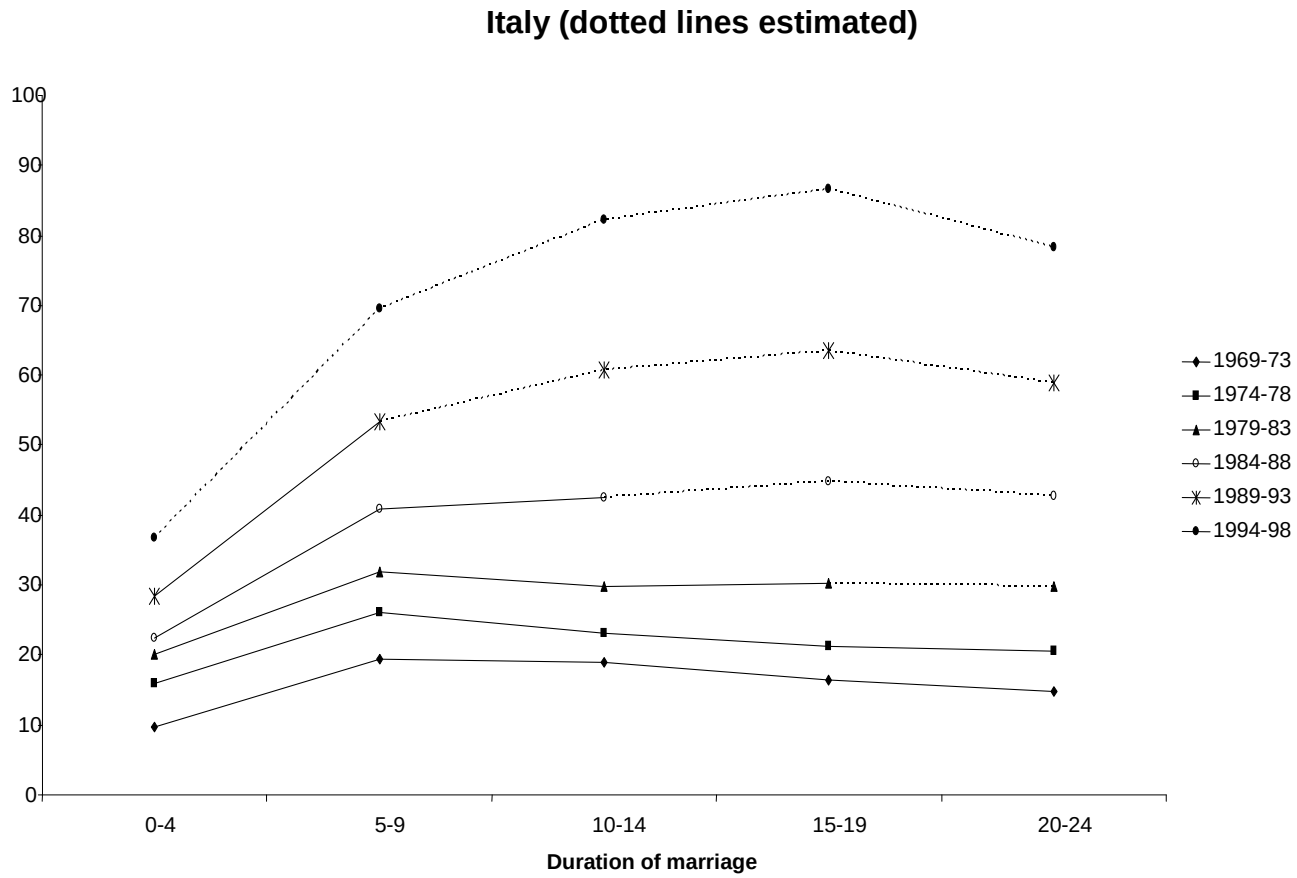
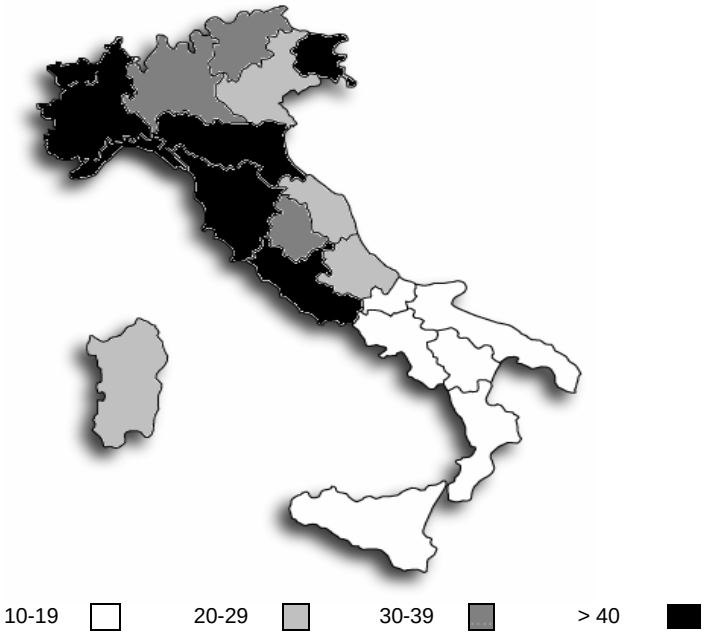


Figure 2. (Continued)



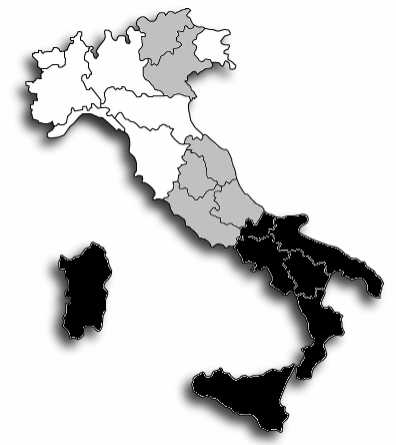
Sources: see table 8

Figure 3. Estimate of the proportion of marriages celebrated in 1998 ending in legal separation before their 20th wedding anniversary (%), by region[1]



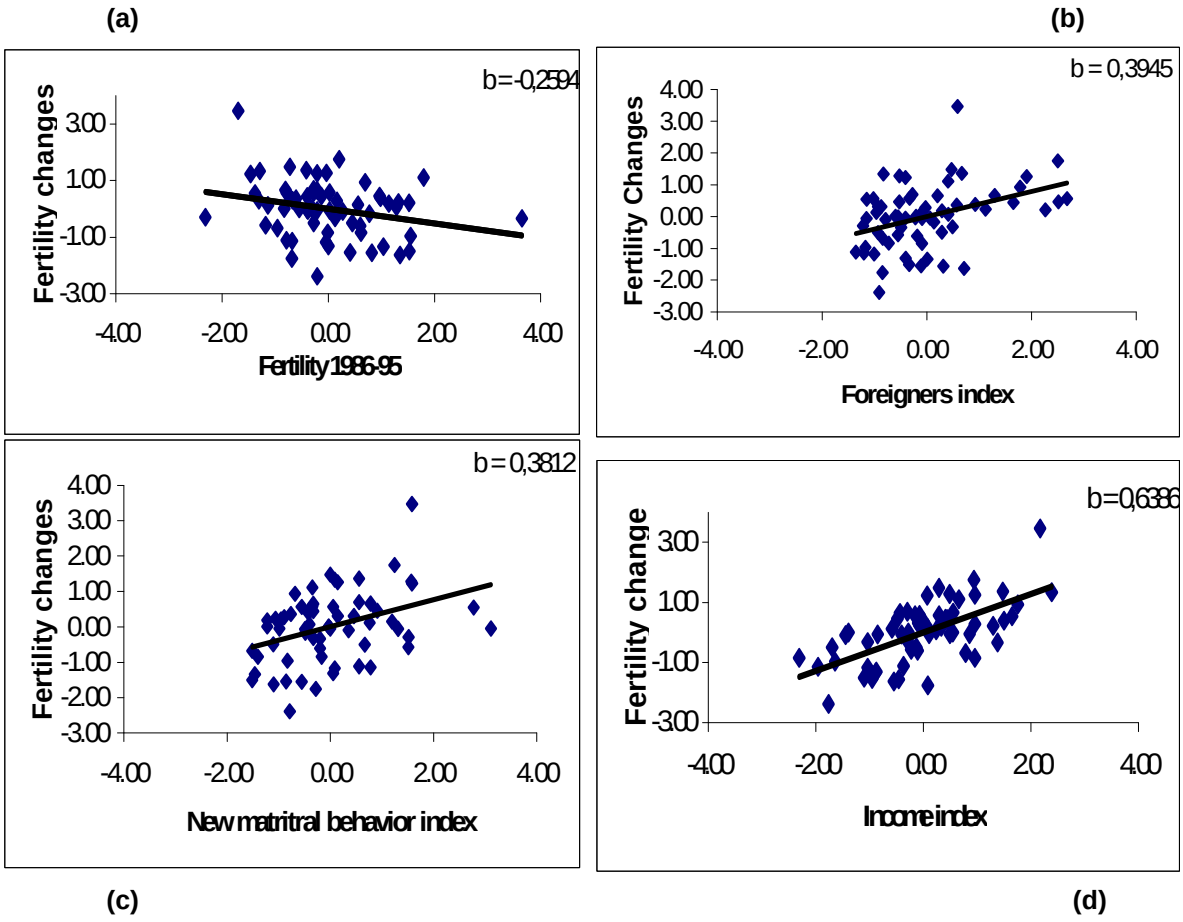
[1] See table 9

Figure 4. Geographical perspective by region of fertility indicators in Italy

(a) Mean number of children per woman,1983-85 (National average: 1.33)	*(b) Mean number of children per woman,2003-05 (National average: 1.33)*
	
(c) Proportion of births from foreigners, 2004 (National average: 9%)	*(d) Proportion of out-of-wedlock births, 2004 (National average: 15%)*
	

The twenty Italian regions are ranked in three groups (of six, seven and six units respectively)

Figure 5. Relationship between the variations in fertility and the four indicators linked to our four explicative hypotheses of fertility increase after 1995 in North-Centre of Italy. The 63 Italian provinces in the Centre-North (the province of Rome is included, but the other provinces of Lazio are excluded)



Note:
Dependent Variable
Variation in fertility: TFR 1996-2000 / TFR 1986-95

Independent Variables
(a) Fertility 1986-95: TFR 1986-95
(b) Foreigners: (foreigners / total residents)$_{1998}$ X (born foreigners / foreigners 18+)$_{2000}$
(c) New transition: separations$_{2001}$ / marriages$_{1997}$
(d) Income: (income *pro-capite*)$_{1999}$ X (increase of income *pro-capite*)$_{1991\text{-}99}$