

Geographical mobility and reproductive choices of Italian men

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In addition to women's increased educational attainment and institutional settings, low fertility rates in many Western countries have also been attributed to a changed orientation toward family as a means to achieve full life-satisfaction. Since Southern and Northern Italy differ for the institutional and economic setting, cultural orientations regarding the importance of family as well as fertility behaviours (Fig. 1), it seems reasonable to suppose that fertility differences between the two areas are influenced by both "structural" (i.e. lower female labour market participation) and "cultural" factors (i.e. socialization to the fertility preferences dominant in the childhood environment). This work uses internal migrations (South-to-North) as an interpretative key of geographical differences between North and South of Italy in the timing and number of childbirths.

	First union	First child	Second child
<i>Territorial origin and migration history [ref. Northerners]</i>			
Generation 1.5	1.27*	1.03	1.00
Southerners	1.29***	1.44***	2.16***
Migrants	1.41***	1.03	1.39***
Returned	1.72***	1.34**	1.86***
N. subjects	3182	3182	2182
N. failures	2186	2186	1513

Tab. 1 Hazard ratios from Cox duration models.

Indeed, Southern internal migrants are socialized to different familiar behaviours, although they share with Northerners the same institutional and economic setting. The aim of the analyses is to test whether 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 possible fertility preferences dominant in their childhood environment. Our results show that, once controlling for the month of the first union, North-South differences in the transition to the first child are largely explained by different levels and patterns of female labour market participation (Tab. 1). However, once we model the month of the second childbirth, we find migrants and Southerners to be equally much faster than Northerners. Results confirm how in Italy the timing of the transition to adulthood is strongly related to (men's) economic resources and institutional settings, but they also indicate that preferences could affect the number of children people desire.

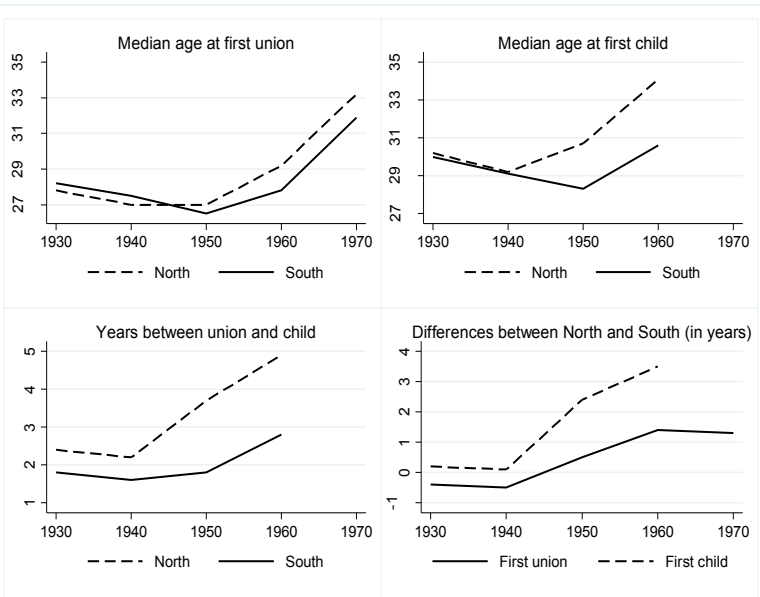


Fig. 1 Median age at the first union and at the first child; differences (in years) between first union and first child; differences (in years) between North and South in the transition to the first child and first union. Kaplan Maier estimates

