

**Similarities and differences between
two cohorts of young-adults in Italy:
the result of a CATI survey on transition to adulthood**

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1. Introduction: the Italian context of latest-late transition to adulthood and lowest-low fertility

A “*latest-late transition*” to adulthood and a “*lowest-low fertility*” (Kohler et al., 2002) defines the socio-demographic Italian context of family formation. The most important feature of Southern Europe is its very low fertility (period total fertility rate below 1.3 children per woman at beginning of new century). Italy, along with other Mediterranean countries such as Spain can be considered the precursor of the lowest-low fertility (Livi Bacci and Delgado Peres 1992). But, also in terms of leaving the parental home, a Mediterranean or Southern European pattern can be recognized. This specific feature, which logically is embedded in the whole process of family formation, is therefore closely related to the timing of marriage and the onset of childbearing (Billari *et al.* 2001).

Even in the Mediterranean region, Italy is undoubtedly the country with the most pronounced delay of young people achieving independent living arrangements (Iacovou 2004, Billari and Ongaro 1999). Almost ninety percent of people in the 20–24 age group still live with their parents, as do fifty nine percent of the 25 – 29 age group, and 22 percent of the 30–34 age group (Multi-purpose Survey, Istat, 1998). The dynamics of the phenomenon are surprising: only a decade earlier, the proportion of young people who still lived in the parental home was markedly lower – respectively 80%, 39% and 14%. Furthermore in Italy the link between timing and typology of the first union is considerably stronger than Central-Northern European countries where informal unions are more common and the age at first union lower. In the late nineties 40% of Italian women entered their first union – in 90% of cases a formal marriage – by the age of 24, whereas at the same age 70% of Swedish women had already experienced an informal union (Schoenmaeckers, Lodewijckx 1999).

The causes of the peculiar and highly conspicuous Italian “*syndrome of delay*” are not easy to understand. According to the classical definition (Modell *et al.* 1976), the transition to adulthood is marked by certain events, where both the timing and the sequence of these events are considered particularly relevant. At the individual level, family formation and fertility behavior is a consequence of a series of choices during the life-course and especially during the period defined as *transition to adulthood*.

It appears that the last few decades have seen a number of “*steps*” in the transition to adulthood become particularly difficult in Italy. Part of this is driven by the rigidity of sequencing of transitions to adulthood. This traditional sequence can be schematized as follows: a) completion of education, b) start of first job, c) exit from the family of origin at the time of marriage, d) birth of first child. Over the last 30 years however, all biographical events that characterize the transition to adulthood have been postponed (Ongaro 2001). Italian young-adults, similarly to other South-

Mediterranean countries, are experiencing an exceptionally long stay in the parental home, also due to a rapid increase in the number of young-adults seeking further education and attending university (Aassve *et al.* 2002).

The economic, cultural, and psychological factors that underlie the transition to adulthood are unsurprisingly inter-related and complex. Several factors have been raised as being crucial in understanding its postponement in Italy: (1) the centrality of marriage for family formation and the prerequisite of a stable job position (De Sandre *et al.*, 1997; Barbagli, Castiglioni, Dalla Zuanna, 2003); (2) the prolonged period dedicated to educational attainments (Ongaro, 2005); (3) the strength of inter-generational ties that typifies the south-western European family compared to north-western countries (Reher 1998, Micheli 2000; Barbagli, Castiglioni, Dalla Zuanna 2003, Dalla Zuanna 2001), characterized by a high level of psychological and material solidarity and also a high residential proximity between generations; (4) the lack of specific policies directed towards young people – typical of the “Mediterranean” welfare regime – (Mayer 2001) generating a strong dependency of young people on parents. Furthermore, and more recently, also the difficulty of entering the labor market, the amount of time required to find a stable position (Rettaroli, 2005), as well as the difficult access to housing (Mencarini and Tanturri, 2005) have also become relevant factors.

In the resulting institutional framework the traditional expectation is that young people should not leave the parental home until they are fully ‘prepared’ to establish a family household, also in order to avoid having to return to the parental house. However, it should be noted that recently, cohabitation – as an alternative or precursor to legal marriage – is gaining pace in Italy, and as such should not be ignored as a new marker for adulthood transition.

In this paper we present results from a sub-sample of a nationally representative survey of Italian young adults, which was recently conducted with the specific aim of studying these crucial transitions in life course and their interconnections. The main aims of the study are threefold:

(1) to verify whether there have been changes in the entry into adulthood for recent Italian cohorts. In doing so we analyze patterns of timing and sequencing of crucial marker events separately for the 1966-70 and 1976-80 cohorts;

(2) to examine whether the reasons why young adults leave home are identical to those, well known, for previous generations, and to investigate why some specific sub-group young individuals make different choices in terms of their transition to adulthood;

(3) to analyze the determinants of transition to parenthood – here defined as having a first child, taking into account the sequence of previous “marker” events of transition to adulthood.

In the analysis of these three aspects, we will also emphasize the well-known geographical differences in the transition to adulthood, i.e. more traditional socio-demographic behavior in the South of Italy and signs of innovation in the North-Center (see, for instance, Rosina et al, 2003)

The empirical methods are based on event-history analysis, which are particularly suitable for uncovering structures of dependency between life course histories (Blossfeld and Rowher, 2002).

The paper is structured as follows: in Section 2 we present the survey, its content and its potential; in Section 3 we show descriptive results on timing and sequence of marker events at transition to adulthood and reasons why young adults leave home for the 1966-70 cohorts; in Section 4 we analyze the determinants of transition out of the parental home, again for 1966-70; in Section 5 we analyze the new cohorts' (1976-80) behavior; Section 6 takes into consideration late parenthood, its possible links with low fertility and its determinants linked to the other markers of the “syndrome of delay”. Our main findings and some discussions are presented in the last section. The model results are detailed in an appendix.

2. Structure, rationale and possibilities of the I.D.E.A. survey

The I.D.E.A. ("Inizio Dell' Età Adulta" - Beginning of Adulthood) survey was carried out on a national-representative sample of more than 3,000 young individuals aged 23-27 and 33-37 between December 2003 and January 2004. It was organized by a consortium of Italian Universities, in the framework of a project on “Life cycle, family building and childbearing between choices and constraints”. Interviews were conducted using CATI (Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing). The two representative samples have been chosen with the aim of considering two precise and sufficiently distant cohorts of both sexes. The sample is stratified by sex, marital status, residential macro-areas (North, Center and South of Italy) and post-stratified with weightings in order to take into account education level (Billari, Dalla Zuanna, 2004).

The originality and novelty of the survey relies not only on the structure (the two distinct and distant cohorts of interviewees) but also on the research approach that combines a longitudinal perspective with a “relational” one. The longitudinal perspective (both retrospective and perspective, since the survey is planned as a first wave of a panel) allows a dynamic analysis of individual paths and sequences of key events leading to adulthood. The “relational” perspective acknowledges the importance of certain key actors, such as the parents of the individual interviewed, the partner (even if not cohabiting) and also siblings and peer groups. As a result, a sample 592 mothers from the younger cohort still living with their parents was also interviewed. The aim was to directly consider the attitudes of mothers with respect to their children’s autonomy

and the material and moral constraints created by the parental home that can influence the *tempo* and choices of transition to adulthood of young people. The role of parents was also investigated for young individuals who have already left the parental home. In this case information on both moral and practical issues was collected. Moreover, information on income support throughout the life-cycle and steps toward autonomy and adulthood, were collected. The rationale behind this strategy is that in the Italian context characterized by “strong family ties” and a very weak welfare provision, parents have a strong “propulsive” or “braking” power on their children’s timing of autonomy, with consequential effects on timing of all successive phases (union formation and fertility behavior).

Here we analyze firstly data from the oldest group interviewed, aged 33-37 (born from 1966 to 1970) and consisting of 1533 interviewees. For this older group we would like to capture retrospectively the different phases of transition to adulthood such as exiting of the parental home, union formation and fertility choices. The aim is to gain understanding of various social processes, such as education and work, and their interaction with parallel sentimental careers, such as union formation and fertility biographies. Particular attention is placed on job characteristics, emphasizing the role of job stability. The hypothesis that we would like to investigate is whether increased flexibility in the labor market has led to precarious job positions that may influence and further slow down the path toward residential autonomy and adulthood.

The youngest group interviewed is aged 23-27 (cohorts born from 1976 to 1980) and is made up of 1550 interviewees. The information gathered on this younger group enables us to study the beginning of the individual paths and the decision-making process that leads to the eventual exit from the parental home, the entering into a union, and the forming of one’s own fertility intentions. The majority of young people in this age group still live with their parents (approximately 70% according to a recent survey, Buzzi et al., 2002). This means that for this group it is possible to study ex-ante interactions between different actors in the family, which may lead to housing autonomy or – for those who have already experienced it – the first phases of life outside the family. In addition to individual information on life-course (such as leaving and returning to the parental home, union formation and fertility), the survey also collected detailed information on education, work, and also sentimental biographies.

3. Timing and sequence of the events of the transition to adulthood

3.1. A further delay for the 1966-1970 cohort

The analysis of timing and sequence of the events of transition to adulthood is firstly conducted on the older cohort interviewed (age 33-37, born 1966-1970). For this cohort it is possible to verify, with “event history analysis” methods, whether the determinants of the path out of the parental home are changed or not, with regards to what it is known in literature. Most of these young people have for the most part completed the process of residential autonomy: 86% of men and 90.3% of women have left home at least once at the time of the interview. Table 1 shows median ages at marker events of transition to adulthood.

The proportion of those who never left home at the age of 30 is directly comparable with other Italian data: in particular 1996 Fertility and Family Survey data (De Sandre et al. 1999) and 1998 Multi-purpose survey (Istat 2003). According to FFS data, in the 1961-65 cohort, 84.9% of men and 89.6% of women have left home at the age of 30. Thus, from the comparison a further general slight delay in leaving home can be revealed for our cohort (1966-1970) that is even stronger in the North of Italy for men and in the Center for women (data not shown here). By comparing the age at leaving the parental home for the two cohorts, we see quite clear gender differences. For both cohorts the median age for men is 27, whereas for women there has been a postponement from 24 to 25 years.

For all other markers there is a further postponement, a trend in Italy which has remained uninterrupted since cohorts born during the ‘50s (De Sandre *et al.*, 1997; Castiglioni *et al.*, 2003): in fact, a slight increase in median age may be seen in these younger generations, compared to the previous cohorts, also in regard to age at first job, first marriage and first child. Concerning first sexual relations, the median age of males is consistent with ages found from other source of data (Ongaro, 2004) and is slightly lower for females. Both table 1 and figure 1 show a very high median age at cohabitation, a symptom of the scarce prevalence on a national level of cohabitation as a form of first union⁵.

The latest data from Istat (Istat, 2005) confirm an increasing propensity of Italian young adults to leave the parental home to form an informal union: the proportion of unions with both partners never married was 47.6 percent in 2003, against 29.5 percent 10 years prior.

⁵ The phenomenon of cohabitation has a strong regional gradient in Italy and is widespread only in the areas of centre-northern Italy (Rosina, 2001, 2002).

3.2 The reasons for leaving home

The most recent investigations have shown that something is changing in the reasons why young people leave home. Figure 2 highlights some new motivations for the young adults born between 1966-70. Marriage is still the prevalent reason to exit the parental house, but among men having left the parental house before the age of 30 the second most important reason is driven by their professional career. Cohabitation as a motivation for leaving the family of origin is also increasing: 9% of women and 8% of men have left home before the age of 30 to cohabit with a partner.

Figure 2 shows the different pattern of timing for home-leaving according to the reason for doing so. Home-leaving curves for marriage and cohabitation are quite similar, confirming that cohabiters belonging to this cohort leave home as late as those who leave home for marriage. However, it is also seen that those who leave home for reasons other than union formation show a different pattern and a relevant anticipation of the event. Students who leave home for educational reasons and those who leave home for working reasons bring about this anticipation.

Regional patterns (shown in the second graph, b), of figure 3) are also strong on reasons with the main features to be underlined being: (1) The proportion of North-Center Italian men exiting because of marriage is particularly low compared to previous cohorts (Ongaro, 2001); (2) Leaving the parental home in order to form a cohabitation is a behavior which is spreading in the North-Center of Italy, whereas in the South it is still a marginal category⁶; (3) The proportion of young men leaving the parental home for work reasons is higher in the South, where the unemployment rate is higher, confirming the existence of interregional migration movements with a South-North gradient; (4) The level of young women leaving the parental home to study far from the family of origin is higher in the South than in the North-Center. This aspect is a clear sign of innovation in the behavior of the most traditional part of Italy, particular relevant especially for Southern women.

3.3 The persistence of a rigid sequence of events for the 1966-70 young adults

A general observation on transition from youth to adulthood among post-war cohorts across Europe is the de-standardization and de-synchronization of the life course. The segments and events included in the process of transition to adulthood themselves have become less strictly defined and their sequence more diverse. In the passage from a “standard” transition to a “choice” transition from youth to adulthood, there is no longer a strict normative model with appropriate ages for

⁶ From IDEA survey the proportion of cohabiting people among cohorts 1966-1970 is 19.2% for Italy, hiding a 25.5% for Center-North part and only 7.4% for South (Billari and Rosina, 2005).

certain steps of the life course (Giddens 1990; Schizzerotto and Beck 1999; Corijn and Klijzing, 2001).

Nevertheless, the Italian context has been described as far more normative and rigid. In Italy two distinctive aspects of the sequence of events have been evidenced, at least for cohorts born up to the beginning of the 60s: (1) a high degree of synchronization between exiting of the family of origin and the first marriage; (2) the beginning of the working life in a non-autonomous residential situation, i.e. still living in the parental home. Our data – on 1966-1970 cohorts – confirms these characteristics, though with some signs of change.

Figure 1 shows clearly the rigid sequences of events experienced by young adults: very rarely do young people marry while they are still studying or in job training. This rigid path seems to be more flexible for the later cohorts.

Figure 3 shows the prevalence of simultaneousness between exiting of the parental home and marriage, although more than one third of men and one fifth of women have left the parental home before marrying (the spread of cohabitation does not suffice to explain this high percentage – see next paragraphs for details on reasons for exiting the home). In regard to the link between the first job and exiting the parental home, it is evident from figure 4 that most young people leave the parental home only after having experienced their first job. Also for this sequence, the exceptions are more frequent among males than females.

The partial de-synchronization between exiting and marriage shown by Italian adults might be determined by recent changes to the Italian job market, changes which have affected in particular the cohorts under study. The sense of precariousness introduced by new flexibility in the job market generates a tendency to privilege non-definitive choices, including cohabitation. In said situation, the rigid sequence of the end of education, a stable job, house ownership and then marriage cannot be adhered to.

Table 1: Median and quartile ages at “marker” events of transition to adulthood, by gender (Kaplan – Meier estimates)

| Events | Men | | | Women | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|--------|----------------|----------------|--------|----------------|
| | First quartile | Median | Third quartile | First quartile | Median | Third quartile |
| 1 st sexual intercourse | 16.5 | 18.5 | 19.5 | 17.5 | 19.5 | 21.5 |
| 1 st job | 17.6 | 21.4 | 27.5 | 19.5 | 24.0 | 35.8 |
| 1 st exit parental home | 23.0 | 27.2 | 30.6 | 21.7 | 25.1 | 28.6 |
| 1 st marriage | 26.6 | 30.1 | — | 23.4 | 26.6 | 32.7 |
| 1 st child | 29.2 | 33.4 | — | 25.3 | 29.3 | 35.4 |
| 1 st cohabitation | 31.2 | — | — | 29.3 | 37.5 | — |

Figure 1: Survival functions at marker events by gender (cohort 1966-1970)

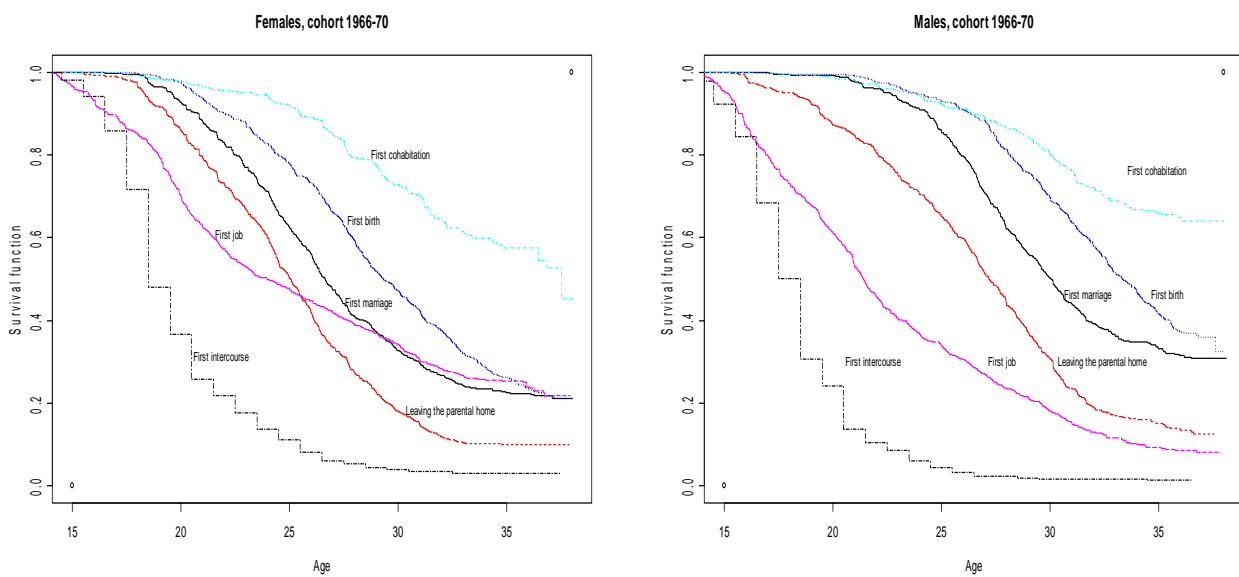
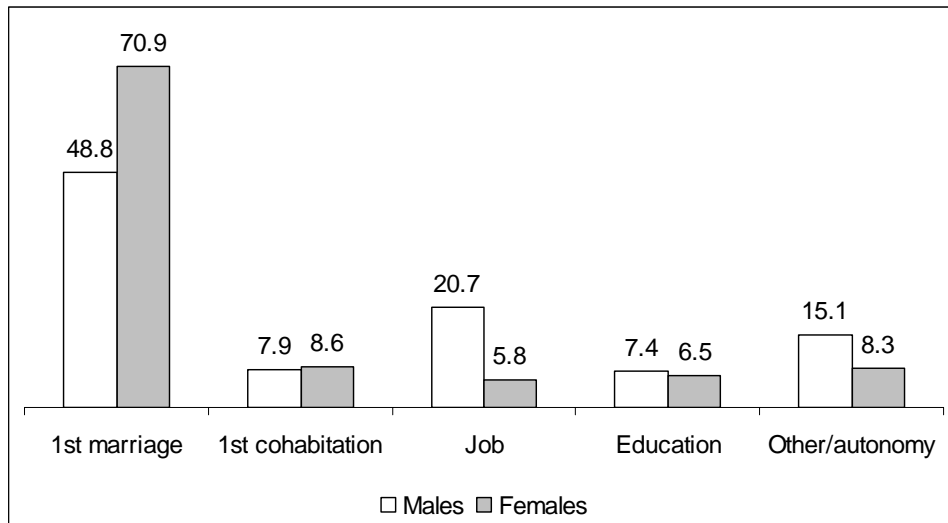


Figure 2: Survival function at leaving the parental home by gender and reason for leaving.



Figure 3: Proportion of young people who never left parental home by age of 30, with reasons for leaving and gender (full sample)

3a) Italy (full national representative sample)



3b) by geographical residence

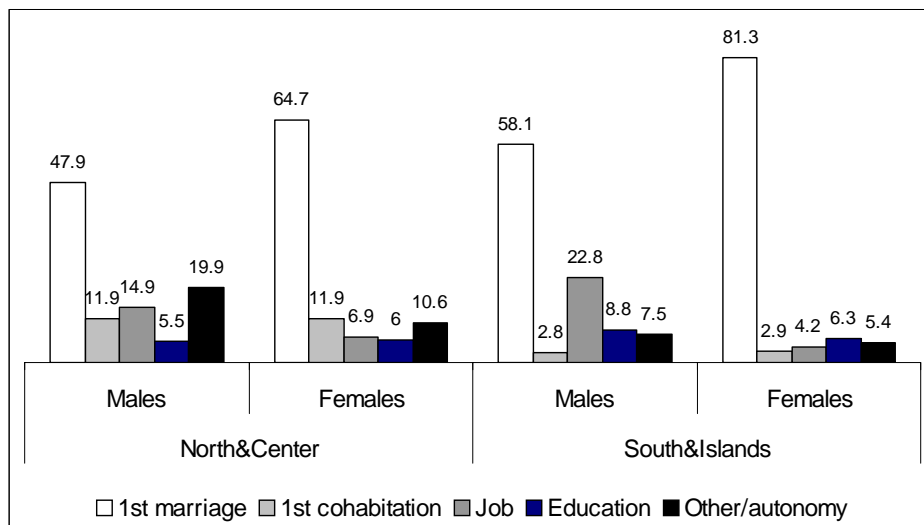
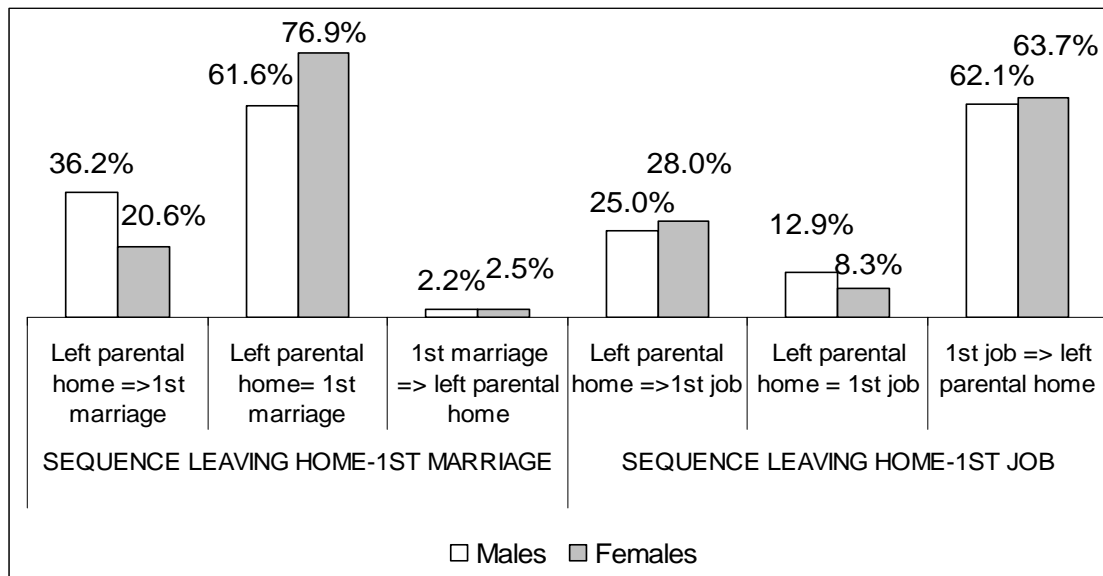


Figure 4: Prevalence of certain sequences between exiting parental home and 1st marriage and 1st job by gender



4. Determinants of the path out of the parental home

As stated previously, the two main features in Italy for the transition to adulthood are 1) the synchronization between exiting the parental home and entering a union and 2) the entry into the labor market while remaining with parents. Nevertheless we find that there is an increasing heterogeneity in the main motivation as indicated by the respondents for the departure from family of origin. Some reasons for why young people leave home are becoming more socially relevant. In this section our aim is to understand if the association, already found in the literature for the Italian transition to adulthood, between acquisition of one's own independence and personal and social characteristics - such as residence, education level, first job experience, sentimental and sexual experiences, family of origin and religiosity - are changing for the analyzed cohorts. We aim to study whether those who buck the trend and anticipate the exit from the family of origin are identifiable by particular characteristics. Our interest is also toward delineating those casual links between motivation for leaving the parental house and the previously listed individual and social characteristics. Therefore we would like to analyze the process of leaving home, taking into account the different destinations of young individuals.

The hypotheses between the independence of young adults and such characteristics are those well known in the literature (see, among others, Ongaro 2001). The school and employment career have a significant influence on the timing of the entry into the household and family career of men and women. For the latter, investments in education make the transition to first residential autonomy more difficult and may even postpone the acquisition of independence. Occupation plays a similar role: employed women show higher ages when they begin to create a family of their own and at the birth of the first child. The change in participation in regard to education and work occurring over the last decades in Italy has heavily contributed to a delay in the onset of having one's own household and family, particularly for young women but also for young men.

Moreover, gender differences do not seem to have disappeared in the transition to adulthood: the greater involvement of women in personal fulfillment in areas outside the family makes it difficult to reconcile the career of wife and/or mother with other domains of action such as work or study. Thus, women are only able to start a family once they have reached a sufficiently secure position socially. The postponement of entry into adulthood in Italy has been found to have further social determinants. Having many siblings accelerates the exit from the parental home and the birth of the first child. Moreover the characteristics of the family of origin in terms of educational and professional background of parents have proved to influence tendencies concerning transitional events. The more stable the social career of the family is, the longer the delay in the passage to adult age responsibilities. Religion and devoutness also play an important role in the

family behavior of the individual. Being highly religious, or having parents who are so makes for a slower exit from the parental nest and a higher age at first union, but accelerates first parenthood. A reverse effect has been found for the experimentation of the first sentimental relationship and initial sexual activity: experiencing these events at a young age means for an earlier first exit from the parental home, but a later onset of reproductive career.

If we look at the links between the decision to exit the parental home, and the covariates that the literature has recognized as influencing the process (table 2), we can see that the positive determinants associated with an earlier exit from parental home, a part from residence in a main city and having completed one's education, are quite different by gender. Among males, an earlier exit is associated more frequently with not having been religious at the age of 16 and with having siblings and a father in an medium status working position, whereas precocious females tend to live in the South and to have had sentimental and sexual relations at an early age and, more frequently, tend to be working.

These results must be borne in mind when looking at the next model which investigates the “destinations” after leaving the parental home. Because of the high correlation between leaving the parental home and union formation, leaving home is considered with respect to union formation. In order to consider the multidimensionality of the leaving home process, we use a competing risk hazard regression model with a piecewise constant exponential risk (see, Blossfeld & Rowher, 2002), where the transitions to different states are considered the competing events⁸.

By taking into account leaving home with the entry into a union, we classify individuals into five groups (1) those who have never left the parental home or experienced a first union – which in the model is the original state; (2) those who have entered into a union while remaining in the parental home; (3) those who have left the parental home and, at the same, experienced first marriage; (4) those who have left the parental home to enter into a first cohabitation; and (5), those who have left the parental home for some reason other than a union (e.g. education, job career, search of personal independence, etc.)⁹. The detailed results of the models are in the appendix.

Numerous empirical studies have emphasized the presence of strong ties between social features and family formation. In this section we focus on how the characteristics of the parental household and the educational and work careers of the young adults influence the propensity of the onset of an independent life distinguishing by the different reasons upon exiting the parents' home. From the model with covariates shown in table 3 we find evidence consistent with existing

⁹ Some of the covariates used in the models are defined as time dependent. These are defined so that their value can change within one episode. In this way, the effect of a time-varying variable starts only from the moment in which the individual enters the state. For instance, the effect of being a student on the risk of leaving home influences the dependent variable only during the period in which said individual is a student and not for the entire episode.

literature, and only sometimes do we find evidence of clear gender differences. Here we are interested in highlighting, more than the well known characteristics of those having left for a marriage (more often residing in the South of Italy and sentimentally and sexually precocious), the characteristics of emerging groups of young people leaving home for cohabitation or for other reasons, such as education or job. Both these groups are characterized by the fact that they are more frequently composed of non-religious people. The effect of religion is reinforced by the non-religiosity of the father during the adolescence period in young cohabitating males. However, the similarities between the two emerging groups end here. Those who have left for an informal union are more commonly located in the Center and North of Italy and are those who have had an early sexual initiation. Those who have left for work or education are more often from the South (particularly for males, confirming the well known South-North internal migration tendency for education or work reasons), are only children, have highly educated mothers and reside in a main city.

Table 2: Principal findings of the leaving home hazard regression. Determinants of leaving home earlier; cohorts 1966-1970 (see appendix table 1)

| Covariates | Male | Female |
|---------------------------------------|------|--------|
| Resident in a main city | X | X |
| Resident in the South | | X |
| Not religious at the age of 16 | X | |
| First sexual intercourse <18 | | X |
| First sentimental relationship <16 | | X |
| Completed education | X | X |
| Having a job | | X |
| Having siblings | X | |
| Father medium status working position | X | |

Table 3: Principal findings of the leaving home hazard regression with multiple destinations. Determinants of leaving home for different destinations; cohorts 1966-1970 (see appendix table 2 for complete results)

| Covariates | Marriage | | Cohabitation | | “Other reasons” | |
|---|----------|--------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Resident in a main city | | | | | X | X |
| Resident in South | South | South | Center/North | Center/North | South | |
| Not religious at the age of 16 | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| First sexual intercourse <18 | | X | | X | | |
| First sentimental relationship <16 | | | | | | |
| Completed education | | | | | | |
| Having a job | | X | | | | |
| Siblings | | | 1 + | | none | none |
| Father working position | | | High | | | |
| Father not religious when he/she was 16 | | | X | | | |
| Mother with high education level | | | | | X | |

5. *The new cohort’s behavior*

We have thus far analyzed the behavior of cohorts born in 1966-70 in terms of transition to adulthood. However, one of the main points in this research is to ascertain whether the new cohorts (born ten years later) show further changes in the path to adulthood with respect to the older ones. Such a comparison cannot be complete as the younger cohorts are at the very beginning of the transition process. Some events in particular (e.g. the first child) have only been experienced by a quite small proportion, thus we can only compare the beginning of the process of transition to adulthood of the two cohorts.

In regard to marriage, for instance, we can see (figure 5) that there is a delay, particularly for females, whereas for men there is only a slight (and not significant) anticipation at the very beginning, at approximately the age of 20. But after the age of 20 the postponement of marriage

seems clearer even though we are dealing with a sample where the proportion of those ever married before the age of 23 is extremely low (less than 10%).

A part from marriage reasons, we can see a clear anticipation of leaving the parental home. The anticipation is slight for women but clear for young men (see figure 6). A similar result is shown by Ongaro (2005) with a different dataset. Thus the younger cohorts seem to leave home before the older ones and given that there is no anticipation of marriage, there should be an increase in those leaving home for a destination other than marriage. One route out of the parental home that is increasing in prevalence is cohabitation. This comes as no surprise given that even among the older cohorts we noticed an increasing preference for cohabiting unions. In any case, table 4 illustrates that also leaving home for education is increasing in prevalence, particularly when we consider those who left home before the age of 23. 43% of males from the younger cohort who left home before the age of 23 left for education while the same figure is 21% for males of the older cohort. Similarly 37% of young women from the 1976-80 cohort who left home before the age of 23 left for education compared to 19% in the older cohort. In the same table we find confirmation of the increasing prevalence of cohabitation even though the proportion of those who leave to cohabitate remains considerably lower in respect to Northern and Central Europe. Conversely there is a lower prevalence of leaving home for marriage, particularly for females, even though marriage is still the main route taken out of the parental home¹¹.

Moreover, we can also notice that among males there is a decreasing tendency to leave home for work: 44% of men who left home before the age of 23 left for work reasons in the older cohort, but for the younger cohort the figures drop to 16%.

This factor suggests a possible delay in the beginning of the working career between the two cohorts. Indeed, the survival functions at the first job reported in figure 7 confirm this, at least before the age of 23. This postponement of the first job is an indirect effect of the extended period of education which is taking place in Italy: the proportion of people who ended their education before the age of 23 is 79% among the men from the 1966-70 cohort and 62% among the men from the youngest cohort. Females show a similar trend (76% vs. 55%).

Thus the comparison between the two cohorts gives us a strange picture of the evolution of the process of transition to adulthood which is currently transpiring in Italy: the extended duration of the educational career is often addressed as one of the factors responsible for the increasing age at other marker events of transition to adulthood. In fact, despite this prolonged period, we are

¹¹ This is true for young women but not for men, as the proportion of those who left home for marriage is approximately 15%. We have to keep in mind however, that we are dealing with a particular sub sample of youth: those who left home before 23. Since men are very unlikely to marry before that age, this sub sample is mostly made up of those who left home for other reasons. In the whole male sample, as seen in previous sections, marriage is the most prevalent reason for leaving home.

observing a slight anticipation of transition to adulthood, at least where leaving home is concerned. As a matter of fact, while on one hand this has caused a postponement of the beginning of work career, on the other hand young adults leave home for education at an increasing rate.

Another point of interest is the diffusion of cohabitation. It is generally acknowledged that in Italy the prevalence of cohabiting unions is far below the European average. Results from multiple destinations hazard models and survival curves show that young people leave home to cohabit with greater frequency. The behavior of the younger cohort is in line with this trend and the prevalence of cohabitation is higher when contrasted to the 1966-70 cohort, shown in figure (8). Both males and females enter into non-marital unions earlier: 7% of women from the 1976-80 cohort started a cohabitation before the age of 23 compared to 4% of the older cohort, while for men the same figures are 9% and 5%. These percentages are still quite low if compared to most European countries, however it seems indisputable that there is a slow change in the behavior of union formation in Italy.

Undeniably, interpretations drawn from comparisons between cohorts must be made with caution. The younger cohort is at the very beginning of its transition to adulthood, so that the initial trend we find from the survival curves does not provide us with enough information to make certain statements regarding the real evolution of the process. Is, for instance, the anticipation of cohabitation that has been found a quantum or a tempo effect? In other words, is this a sign that there is a diffusion of cohabiting unions or is there only an anticipation of these? In fact, we have no elements with which to furnish an accurate answer to that query.

Nevertheless, new insight may be gained from this analysis: firstly, there is a clear postponement of the end of one's educational career which has an indirect effect on the beginning of the working career, i.e. young adults start their first job later. This is usually accompanied with a delay in leaving the parental home. In fact, young adults leave home earlier (particularly males) with a growing prevalence of leaving home for educational reasons (typically moving closer to the university). This suggests that we are likely to observe an increasing rate of returning to the parental home after the end of studies, as indeed another analysis shows that this is the case.

Figure 5 Survival functions at first marriage by gender and cohort. Weighted data.

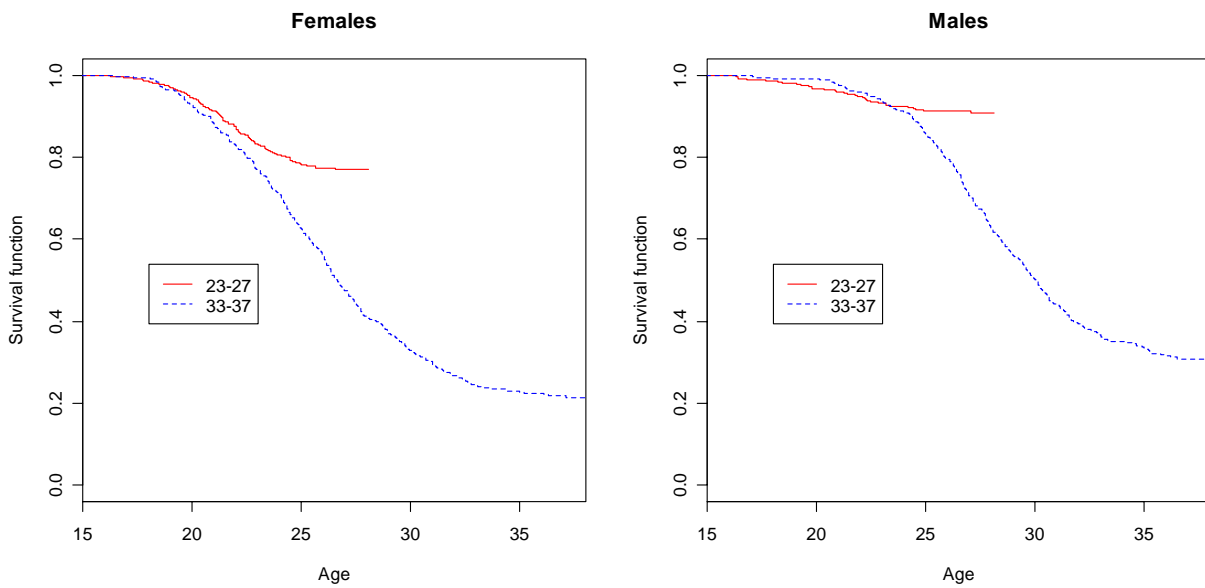


Figure 6 Survival functions at leaving the parental home by gender and cohort. Weighted data.

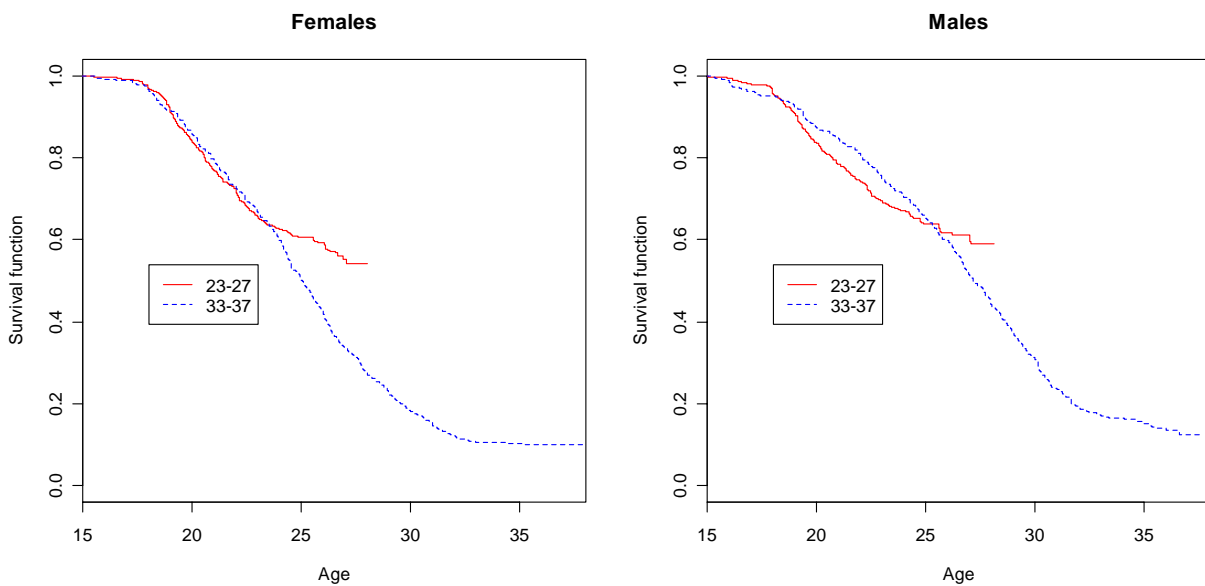


Table 4 Young adults who ever left the parental home by the age of 23 by cohort, gender and reason for leaving, weighted data.

| | Males | | Females | |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 1976-80 | 1966-70 | 1976-80 | 1966-70 |
| Marriage | 14,11 | 15,06 | 43,51 | 58,21 |
| Cohabitation | 5,43 | 4,08 | 9,13 | 7,19 |
| Job | 15,50 | 43,68 | 5,08 | 7,37 |
| Education | 43,86 | 21,37 | 36,81 | 19,03 |
| Other reasons | 21,10 | 15,82 | 5,46 | 8,21 |
| Total (=100) | 227,5 | 178,9 | 264,1 | 215,4 |

Figure 7 Survival functions at first job by gender and cohort. Weighted data.

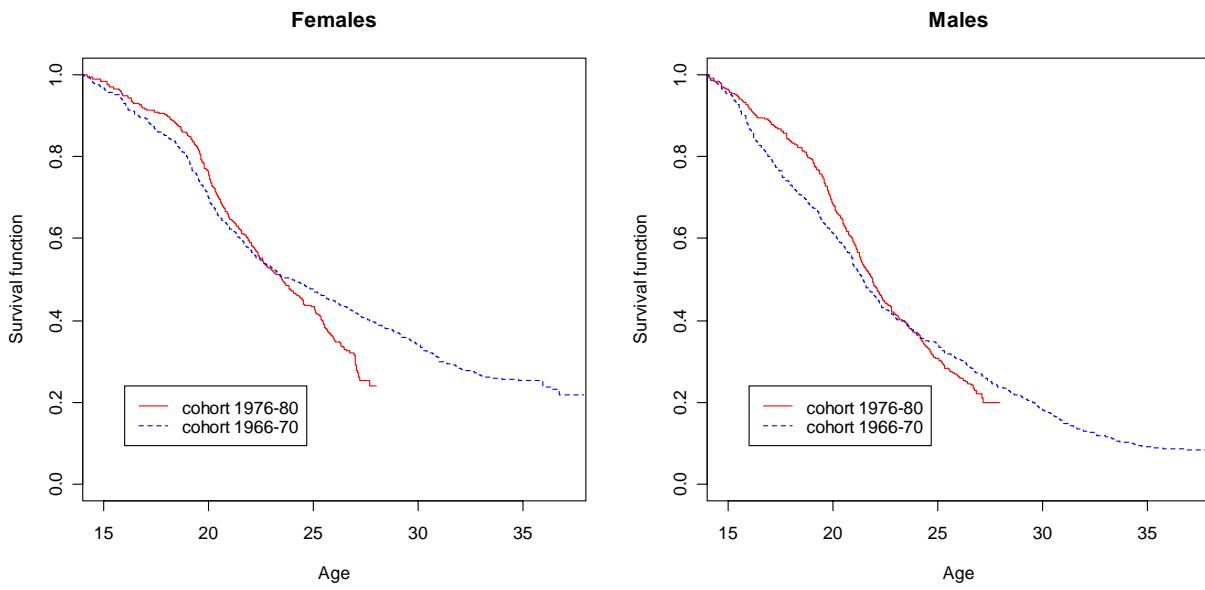
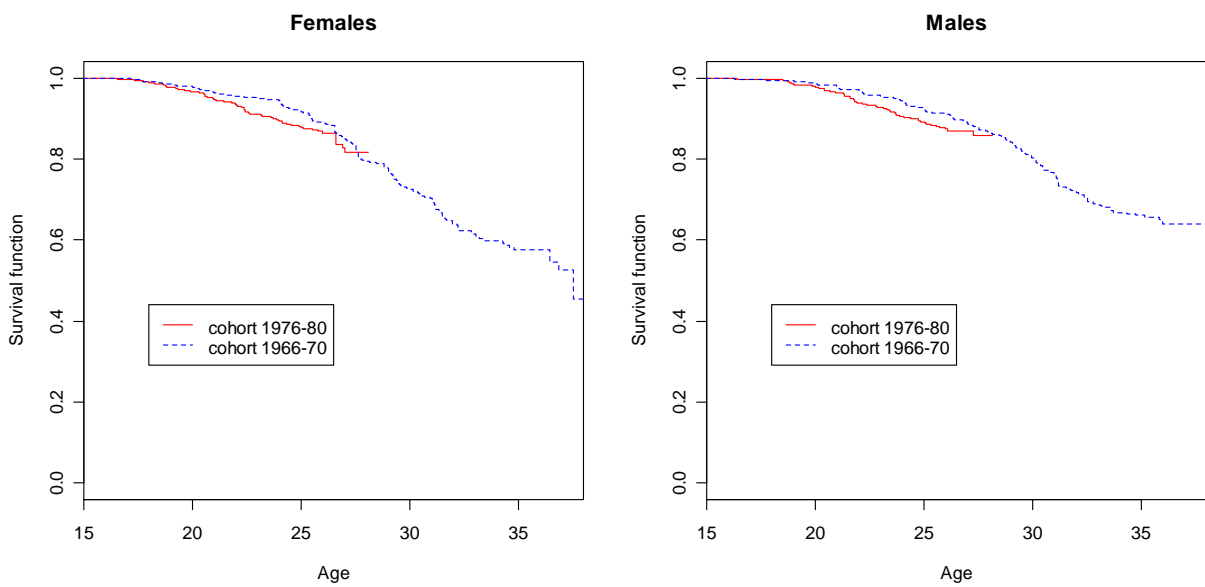


Figure 8 Survival functions at first cohabitation by gender and cohort. Weighted data.



6. Late parenthood

6.1. Does late transition mean late and low fertility?

The link between delayed union formation and parenthood is a central issue of analysis in Italian fertility patterns. (Salvini 2004; Billari and Rosina 2004).

Figure 1 (paragraph 3) shows survival curves for first child, by gender, together with those of leaving home and first job. The median age at first child is 29.3 for women and 33.4 for men. There is a noticeable difference by residential regions: for both men and women median age is one year higher in the Center-North compared to the South-Islands.

The delay at the first childbearing is therefore confirmed and is clearly evident when we compare this with previous cohorts. Figure 9 shows the proportion of women married and mothers by the age of 25 and the proportion of men married or fathers by the age of 30, by cohorts. The proportion of married individuals is decreasing for younger cohorts everywhere and for both men and women. On the contrary, fertility patterns still seem to have a strong geographical gradient. The data suggest a rather stationary situation for Southern young adults – 37.7% being mothers by 25 years old and 47.7% being fathers by 30 – and a further decreasing proportion of men and women who experience parenthood by these defined ages. In the Center-North part of Italy only 20% of women have a child by the age of 25 and only 30% of men by the age of 30.

How can we link this fertility behavior to previous steps of transition to adulthood, such as residential autonomy and union formation? The evidence from this descriptive data is that, in a general context of late and low fertility, transition to parenthood (measured as the timing of the first childbearing event) is relatively quicker and more frequent where the onset of family formation is less delayed and consists of a marriage. An interesting feature is shown in figure 10. If we draw survival functions by gender and reason for having left the parental home, as expected, we found that those leaving home for the “traditional” motivation of marriage are those having earlier and more frequently a first child. It is worth noticing though that those having left home for reasons other than a union seem to be a select group, having later and less frequently a child. In particular, it is striking to note the survival curves for women having left home for reasons other than a union. This picture of course is pertinent to only a small proportion of young Italians, which, nevertheless, is increasing and seems however to be quite different from the majority.

Furthermore, the diffusion of out-of-wedlock births, prevalent in Central-Northern European countries, remains low in Italy, though again we can see regional differences. From our data, 12% of women and 10% of men in the North-Center areas of Italy have experienced an out-of-wedlock

birth, whereas these percentages halve for Southern regions¹². Of course among these young cohorts the spread of illegitimate births is linked to the diffusion of cohabitation as a union prior to or in place of marriage (for the role and the spread of cohabitation in Italy, see Billari and Rosina, 2005). It is evident that for the time being we cannot see a pronounced diffusion of out-of-wedlock fertility, even in the North-Center of Italy. As such, there is not much evidence to support any convergence to Central-Northern European patterns. From this simple descriptive analysis, with respect to the research questions posed, we can therefore affirm that:

- (1) the delay of childbearing endures for recent cohorts, with the well known gender and South-North of Italy differentials;
- (2) the proportion of out-of-wedlock births has increased in the Center-North of Italy and this is consistent with the spread of cohabiting unions in those regions, but at aggregate level these regions are still those with relatively lower and belated fertility.

6.2 Determinants to the transition to first child linked to the other markers of “syndrome of delay”

In this last part of our empirical analysis, we would like to assess the relationship between leaving home, union formation and the timing at the first birth. We therefore model the hazard of having the first child for young adults who are in a union, and we use the different paths out of the parental home as covariates. Here we use a single destination hazard risk regression, but in this case we allow for period-specific effects in order to relax the proportionality assumption that is implicit in the piecewise constant exponential model¹³. The results are shown in table A3 in appendix. We divided covariates into groups, corresponding to the respondent’s individual and family characteristics, their education and first job and the steps towards adulthood with particular attention to union formation.

If we focus our attention on the effects of transition to adulthood events, we notice some salient findings, i.e. that an early beginning of an active sexual life delays the transition to motherhood. Furthermore we find a positive effect of marriage and cohabitation but a negative effect of their interaction. This means that the combination of premarital cohabitation and marriage makes the transition to parenthood less likely compared to marriage without cohabitation or

¹² This is consistent with a 11.1% of prevalence for all cohorts at national level (Istat, 2001).

¹³ For this reason, in table A3 of the appendix we find three estimates for each covariate: the first is the effect of the covariate relative to the first period (below the age of 26 for females and 29 for males), the second is related to the second period (26-30 and 29-32) and the last one is the effect in the third period (over 30 and over 32)¹³. In some cases, for identification purposes, the parameters are constrained to have the same effect in the whole period, after having tested that the proportionality assumption holds for these variables. Since many variables change their effect according to the different periods, the choice of relaxing the proportionality assumption is confirmed as appropriate.

cohabitation without marriage. This link can be explained by the fact that in Italy most children are born within a marriage with cohabitation being confined to a premarital phase.

Having controlled for variables related to union formation, we still find a positive effect in females from leaving the parental home, both for union formation and for other reasons, limited to the second period (between 26-30). For males a negative effect is posted from leaving home for union formation, again, limited to the second period (between 29-32). This could mean that the most important fact – affecting the sub-sequence fertility – is the leaving of the family of origin, regardless of the reasons indicated for leaving the parental home.

Figure 9: Comparison between Istat data (cohorts up to 1962) and I.D.E.A. survey data (cohorts 1966-70) on proportion of men and women married and parents by certain ages

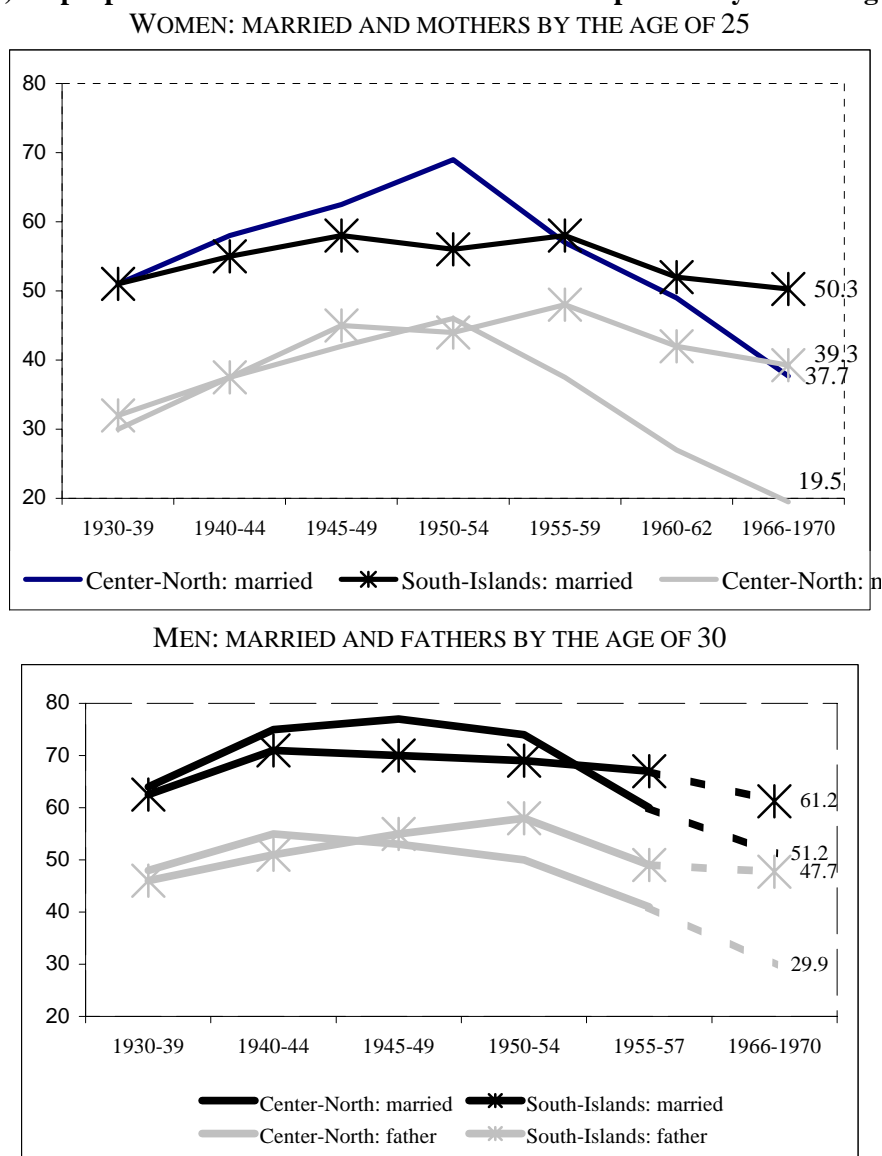
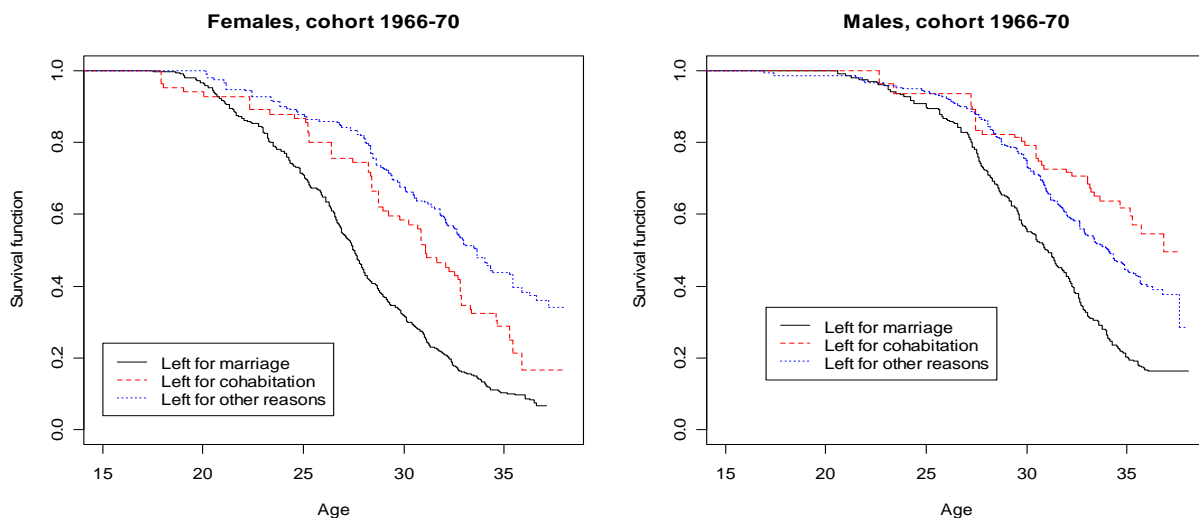


Figure 10: Survival function at 1st birth by gender and reason for having left parental home (cohort 1966-1970, only those having left home)



Conclusions

The availability of the new and recent data gathered with the IDEA survey has offered us a unique possibility to analyze the timing and paths of transition from youth to adulthood of young Italians. In particular, we have observed behavior of cohorts born between 1966 - 1970 and 1976 - 1980. This recent data allow us to affirm that there has been a progressive diffusion of non-traditional post-modern behaviors among cohorts born in the latter part of the 1960s: for instance, the proportion of young people cohabiting has increased, prior to or in place of marriage, as well as the proportion of young adults who have left the parental home for this reason. Nevertheless, it is still difficult to foresee to what extent these young people, experiencing cohabitation, should be considered forerunners or whether there will be a successive further diffusion of such behavior. In fact, even if these signs can be interpreted as converging factors of Italian characteristics toward the rest of Europe – in the framework of Second Demographic Transition – most young Italians will probably continue to leave the parental home straight to marriage.

Concerning the *tempo* of transition to adulthood, survey results confirm a further delay of exit from the family of origin, which the diffusion of cohabitation does not seem to contrast. In particular, the postponing of childbearing has continued: the median age at first birth is 29 years for women and 33 for men. In demographic literature, this late timing is linked to lowest-low fertility levels in Italy. Marriage is still the prevalent reason why young adults leave the parental house before the age of 30, but among men the second most important reason is work. Exits for cohabitation are also increasing, though with a strong Center-North of Italy specification.

The empirical analysis gives some interesting insights into the relationship between events signaling the transition to parenthood and the transition to adulthood: firstly, we find that an anticipation of any event of transition to adulthood is not always positively associated with an anticipation of parenthood. Having first sexual relations before the age of 18, for instance, has for young women a negative effect on the risk of having a first child. Another example of the complex relationship between transition to adulthood events and the onset of childbearing is the effect of union formation. Union formation clearly has a positive effect on the likelihood of having a first child, but the effect of marriage is found to be markedly stronger than the effect of cohabitation. Moreover, we note that the sequence of pre-marital cohabitation and successive marriage weakens the effect of union formation on the likelihood of having a first child. Furthermore the effect of leaving the parental home is quite limited. Even the effect of the first job is slight, but if the effect is broken down according to the type of work contract we find that young women with a permanent job up to the age of 26 are less likely to have a first child (due to their young age, and below that age non-working women are a select group and more likely to have a child). On the other hand, a permanent job has a positive effect on the probability of getting married, therefore indirectly increasing the likelihood of having a first child.

Summarizing, it is clear that all the possible determinants of fertility are dominated by the effect of union formation, and, in particular, marriage. This is in accordance with the Mediterranean family pattern where fertility occurs prevalently within the marriage and cohabitation is still limited, though increasing in prevalence.

The data on the youngest cohort reveals some signs of a changing trend. There is indeed a slight anticipation of leaving home among this cohort in contrast to the older group. The main driver of this anticipation seems to be education: the youngest cohort is delaying the end of education, a delay that in principle should negatively affect the propensity to leave home at early ages, although there is a relevant rise in the proportion of those who leave the parental home for educational reasons (mainly to attend university). In this case, these anticipated exits from the parental home are more likely to be of a provisional nature, and we expect the rate of returning home will increase as well. Alternatively, other marker events of transition to adulthood such as marriage and starting the first job are continuing along a postponement trend.

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Appendix: Model detailed results

Table A1: Determinants of leaving home

| Variables | MALES | | FEMALES | |
|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Coeff | Signif | Coeff | Signif |
| Period1: Females <26, Males <23 | -3.482 | 1.000 | -3.286 | 1.000 |
| Period 2: Females age 23-27, Males <26-30 | -2.329 | 1.000 | -2.071 | 1.000 |
| Period 3: Females >27, Males >30 | -2.158 | 1.000 | -2.002 | 1.000 |
| <u>Respondent individual characteristics</u> | | | | |
| Cohort of birth >1968 | -0.012 | 0.107 | 0.272 | 0.999 |
| Resident in main city | 0.272 | 0.998 | 0.250 | 0.997 |
| Resident in the South of Italy | 0.153 | 0.882 | 0.214 | 0.977 |
| High religious attendance when he/she was 16 | -0.157 | 0.902 | -0.086 | 0.668 |
| <u>Steps towards adulthood & union</u> | | | | |
| First sexual intercourse before 18 | 0.195 | 0.966 | 0.414 | 1.000 |
| First sent. Relationship before 16 | 0.571 | 0.998 | 0.736 | 1.000 |
| <u>Education & job</u> | | | | |
| Student (time varying) | -0.742 | 1.000 | -0.578 | 1.000 |
| Graduated | 0.067 | 0.374 | 0.099 | 0.585 |
| Permanent contract job (time varying) | -0.007 | 0.054 | 0.284 | 0.991 |
| Fixed-term contr. Job (time varying) | 0.056 | 0.339 | 0.298 | 0.984 |
| <u>Family of origin</u> | | | | |
| Sibling 1 (ref. none) | 0.250 | 0.935 | -0.172 | 0.795 |
| Sibling 2 + (ref. none) | 0.254 | 0.930 | -0.003 | 0.020 |
| Father professional or manager when respondent was 16 (ref. no work or other) | 0.274 | 0.864 | -0.115 | 0.506 |
| Father white or blue collar when respondent was 16 (ref. no work or other) | 0.257 | 0.924 | -0.075 | 0.425 |
| Mother employed when respondent was 16 | -0.021 | 0.169 | 0.014 | 0.126 |
| Mother >=secondary school diploma | 0.195 | 0.815 | 0.051 | 0.305 |
| High father religious attendance when respondent was 16 | -0.068 | 0.520 | 0.025 | 0.211 |

Table A2: Leaving home hazard regression with multiple destinations; cohorts 1966-1970

| Variables | MALES | | | | | | | | FEMALES | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | UNION, NO LEFT | | LEFT FOR MARRIAGE | | LEFT FOR COHABITATION | | LEFT, NO UNION | | UNION, NO LEFT | | LEFT FOR MARRIAGE | | LEFT FOR COHABITATION | | LEFT, NO UNION | |
| | Coeff | Signif | Coeff | Signif | Coeff | Signif | Coeff | Signif | Coeff | Signif | Coeff | Signif | Coeff | Signif | Coeff | Signif |
| Period1: Females <26, Males <23 | -6.344 | 1.000 | -4.216 | 1.000 | -7.797 | 1.000 | -4.285 | 1.000 | -7.325 | 1.000 | -4.198 | 1.000 | -6.194 | 1.000 | -4.170 | 1.000 |
| Period 2: Females age 23-27, Males <26-30 | -5.144 | 1.000 | -2.360 | 1.000 | -6.188 | 1.000 | -4.050 | 1.000 | -6.651 | 1.000 | -2.697 | 1.000 | -4.885 | 1.000 | -3.531 | 1.000 |
| Period 3: Females >27, Males >30 | -4.835 | 1.000 | -2.219 | 1.000 | -5.465 | 1.000 | -3.835 | 1.000 | -6.022 | 1.000 | -2.722 | 1.000 | -3.698 | 1.000 | -3.276 | 1.000 |
| <u>Respondent individual characteristics</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cohort of birth >1968 | -0.055 | 0.119 | -0.103 | 0.565 | 0.234 | 0.586 | 0.064 | 0.368 | 0.119 | 0.235 | 0.318 | 0.997 | 1.584 | 1.000 | -0.165 | 0.680 |
| Resident in a main city | -0.020 | 0.044 | 0.015 | 0.090 | 0.435 | 0.836 | 0.452 | 0.999 | 0.360 | 0.761 | 0.225 | 0.968 | 0.170 | 0.433 | 0.369 | 0.968 |
| Resident South of Italy | 0.498 | 0.792 | 0.331 | 0.973 | -1.795 | 0.999 | 0.274 | 0.942 | 0.360 | 0.761 | 0.382 | 0.999 | -0.965 | 0.984 | 0.085 | 0.345 |
| High religious attendance when he/she was 16 | -0.341 | 0.626 | 0.129 | 0.650 | -0.689 | 0.952 | -0.322 | 0.969 | -0.425 | 0.697 | 0.114 | 0.679 | 0.117 | 0.290 | -0.593 | 0.999 |
| <u>Steps towards adulthood & union</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| First sexual intercourse before 18 | -0.087 | 0.177 | 0.198 | 0.848 | 0.466 | 0.887 | 0.160 | 0.738 | 0.096 | 0.150 | 0.257 | 0.947 | 1.561 | 1.000 | 0.385 | 0.946 |
| First sent. Relationship before 16 | 1.072 | 0.855 | 0.610 | 0.950 | 1.136 | 0.907 | 0.360 | 0.807 | -0.241 | 0.219 | 1.126 | 1.000 | 0.269 | 0.419 | 0.051 | 0.128 |
| Partner (time varying) | | | | | | | 0.336 | 0.964 | | | | | | | -0.185 | 0.666 |
| <u>Education & job</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Student (time varying) | -0.696 | 0.865 | -2.006 | 1.000 | -0.556 | 0.877 | 0.089 | 0.403 | -0.894 | 0.935 | -1.001 | 1.000 | -0.439 | 0.800 | 0.309 | 0.861 |
| Graduated | -0.458 | 0.501 | 0.180 | 0.583 | 0.141 | 0.252 | -0.129 | 0.483 | -0.455 | 0.496 | -0.186 | 0.710 | 0.208 | 0.399 | 0.468 | 0.981 |
| Permanent job (time varying) | 0.291 | 0.483 | 0.032 | 0.163 | 0.504 | 0.850 | -0.302 | 0.889 | -0.005 | 0.009 | 0.377 | 0.995 | 0.496 | 0.825 | 0.160 | 0.494 |
| Fixed-term job (time varying) | | | -0.142 | 0.546 | 0.806 | 0.952 | 0.099 | 0.365 | | | 0.299 | 0.951 | 0.564 | 0.805 | 0.405 | 0.866 |
| <u>Family of origin</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sibling 1 (ref. none) | 0.294 | 0.394 | 0.156 | 0.553 | 1.436 | 0.992 | -0.043 | 0.169 | 0.076 | 0.094 | -0.062 | 0.256 | -0.428 | 0.649 | -0.316 | 0.834 |
| Sibling 2 + (ref. none) | 0.443 | 0.555 | 0.122 | 0.431 | 0.969 | 0.907 | 0.159 | 0.564 | 0.076 | 0.094 | 0.230 | 0.797 | -0.040 | 0.073 | -0.392 | 0.910 |
| Father professional or manager when respondent was 16 (ref. No work or other) | -0.534 | 0.527 | 0.106 | 0.279 | 1.687 | 0.987 | 0.179 | 0.490 | 2.155 | 0.874 | -0.046 | 0.165 | -1.117 | 0.971 | 0.029 | 0.071 |
| Father white or blue collar when respondent was 16 | -0.374 | 0.541 | 0.169 | 0.588 | 0.784 | 0.797 | 0.114 | 0.388 | 1.906 | 0.840 | 0.013 | 0.058 | -1.158 | 0.997 | 0.047 | 0.135 |
| Mother employed when respondent was 16 (ref. No work) | 0.979 | 0.992 | -0.124 | 0.572 | 0.184 | 0.429 | 0.096 | 0.485 | -0.242 | 0.417 | -0.029 | 0.207 | 0.056 | 0.141 | 0.061 | 0.276 |
| Mother's education: >=secondary school diploma | -0.177 | 0.206 | -0.297 | 0.712 | -0.971 | 0.866 | 0.519 | 0.993 | -0.580 | 0.544 | 0.024 | 0.110 | 0.197 | 0.354 | 0.021 | 0.075 |
| High father religious attendance when respondent was 16 | 0.520 | 0.822 | -0.004 | 0.021 | -0.731 | 0.956 | 0.010 | 0.054 | -0.586 | 0.736 | 0.058 | 0.379 | -0.518 | 0.855 | -0.004 | 0.016 |

The main results, shown in table A2, are the following:

- the birth cohort shows a positive coefficient only for females in the exits for union formation, with a strong significance for cohabitation;
- at a geographical level, males and females living in the South are more likely to leave home for a marriage than for a cohabitation, and especially for men do we find that the coefficient is particularly high. Moreover, young people residing in main towns show a higher risk of leaving the parental home, especially for reasons other than entering a union.

Among the characteristics likely to influence one's choices of autonomy, we consider some characteristics of the family of origin, which can be considered as a proxy of a personal value structure.

- Number of siblings has generally a positive effect on the risk of leaving home and entering into a union for women, with a preference for traditional models of family formation, and a negative one when we consider the exit from parental home for reasons not connected with a union. For men, it seems that a higher number of sisters and brothers fosters less traditional choices, such as cohabitation or residential autonomy without a union.
- Religious attendance of the father of the young men and women has a negative effect on leaving home for cohabitation. Moreover, men and women who had a high religious attendance when they were aged 16, are less likely to leave home for reasons other than union. The strong effect of this variable testifies the persistence of cultural elements that may slow down the diffusion of new forms of family formation and new ways of independent living.
- Education level and employment status of parents are also considered in the analysis. Mother's education and employment have a positive effect, but not significant for women, on the likelihood to exit for reasons different from a union.
- To better understand the role of educational career, the effect of school enrolment is separated from the influence of the educational level attained (Blossfeld and Huinik, 1991). The first dimension controls the status of still being within the educational system or not, meanwhile the second is a proxy of individual cultural and economic resources. Following the same approach, to evaluate the effects of work career on various destinations we distinguish the first entry into the labor market according to the type of contract (permanent job against a fixed-term contract job). The hypothesis that we want to verify here relies on the fact that in a situation in which the transition to adulthood is defined by a rigid sequence of events – such as in the Italian case – economic autonomy can accelerate or slow down entry into the different destinations.
- Being a male or a female student has a negative effect on the risk of leaving home for union (marriage or cohabitation) and the negative relation is particularly strong for marriage.
- An exit for reasons other than a union, shows a clear gender difference: it seems positively and significantly associated with the educational level for women but not for men. This result tends to confirm the hypothesis that higher qualifications should also allow greater residential autonomy and risk for employment mobility.
- Regarding the role played by the first job on the propensity to residential autonomy, the models estimated underline that for females the presence of a permanent job has positive influence on all the destinations, with a strong statistical significance for the exit for marriage, whereas fixed-term contracts encourage males to leave home for cohabitation.
- Having a partner posts a very interesting difference between men and women: pushing out of the parental home for the first group, holding back for the latter.
- Finally, the sexual and sentimental history of respondents is considered. We find that for young women a relative early beginning of sexual activity has a positive effect on all types of home-leaving, whereas an early beginning of sentimental history facilitates only marriage. For young men the beginning of sexual history is less important, but having had the first sentimental relationship before the age of 16 has a positive effect, especially on marriage.

Table A3: First birth hazard regression with period specific effects, cohort 1966-70

| Variable | Period | ALL | | | | ONLY THOSE IN UNION | | | |
|---|------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | MALES | | FEMALES | | MALES | | FEMALES | |
| | | Coeff | Signif | Coeff | Signif | Coeff | Signif | Coeff | Signif |
| <u>Respondent individual characteristics</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Females: <26; Males < 29 | (period 1) | -7.062 | 1.000 | -6.259 | 1.000 | -6.166 | 1.000 | -6.410 | 1.000 |
| Females: 26-30; Males 29-32 | (period 2) | -5.901 | 1.000 | -4.456 | 1.000 | -4.469 | 1.000 | -2.587 | 1.000 |
| Females: >30; Males >32 | (period 3) | -6.211 | 1.000 | -5.668 | 1.000 | -3.654 | 1.000 | -2.660 | 1.000 |
| Cohort of birth >1968 | (period 1) | 0.254 | 0.865 | -0.116 | 0.703 | 0.289 | 0.909 | -0.089 | 0.421 |
| | (period 2) | 0.124 | 0.482 | -0.116 | 0.703 | 0.025 | 0.100 | -0.136 | 0.614 |
| | (period 3) | 0.091 | 0.333 | 0.315 | 0.927 | 0.123 | 0.433 | 0.331 | 0.926 |
| Resident in the Center of Italy | (period 1) | 0.327 | 0.781 | 0.067 | 0.207 | 0.290 | 0.709 | -0.134 | 0.391 |
| | (period 2) | -0.061 | 0.174 | -0.208 | 0.637 | -0.266 | 0.635 | -0.334 | 0.850 |
| | (period 3) | 0.172 | 0.519 | 0.105 | 0.383 | 0.272 | 0.695 | 0.141 | 0.483 |
| Resident in the South of Italy | (period 1) | 0.862 | 1.000 | 0.491 | 1.000 | 0.830 | 1.000 | 0.394 | 0.995 |
| | (period 2) | 0.233 | 0.850 | 0.491 | 1.000 | 0.021 | 0.075 | 0.394 | 0.995 |
| | (period 3) | 0.233 | 0.850 | 0.491 | 1.000 | 0.375 | 0.886 | 0.546 | 0.979 |
| Resident in main city | (period 1) | 0.163 | 0.787 | -0.322 | 0.947 | 0.109 | 0.670 | -0.314 | 0.932 |
| | (period 2) | 0.163 | 0.787 | -0.232 | 0.957 | 0.109 | 0.670 | -0.172 | 0.863 |
| | (period 3) | 0.000 | 0.001 | -0.232 | 0.957 | 0.109 | 0.670 | -0.172 | 0.863 |
| High religious attendance when he/she was 16 | (period 1) | -0.529 | 0.995 | 0.022 | 0.106 | -0.468 | 0.986 | -0.041 | 0.191 |
| | (period 2) | 0.055 | 0.215 | 0.094 | 0.420 | 0.121 | 0.447 | 0.056 | 0.257 |
| | (period 3) | 0.129 | 0.446 | -0.206 | 0.733 | 0.072 | 0.256 | -0.266 | 0.837 |
| <u>Steps towards adulthood & union</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| First sexual intercourse before 18 | (period 1) | 0.069 | 0.301 | -0.276 | 0.879 | 0.034 | 0.149 | -0.295 | 0.891 |
| | (period 2) | 0.260 | 0.813 | -0.439 | 0.977 | 0.198 | 0.833 | -0.473 | 0.984 |
| | (period 3) | 0.203 | 0.687 | 0.076 | 0.279 | 0.198 | 0.833 | 0.105 | 0.374 |
| Left home before union (time varying) | (period 1) | 0.326 | 0.673 | 0.488 | 0.623 | -0.004 | 0.014 | 0.795 | 1.000 |
| | (period 2) | -0.085 | 0.135 | 1.309 | 0.966 | 0.414 | 0.946 | 0.285 | 0.801 |
| | (period 3) | -0.085 | 0.135 | -0.955 | 0.901 | -0.158 | 0.518 | -0.089 | 0.321 |
| Married (time varying) | (period 1) | 4.386 | 1.000 | 4.906 | 1.000 | 4.428 | 1.000 | 4.959 | 1.000 |
| | (period 2) | 4.386 | 1.000 | 3.066 | 1.000 | 2.313 | 1.000 | 2.537 | 1.000 |
| | (period 3) | 4.386 | 1.000 | 5.759 | 1.000 | 1.938 | 1.000 | 1.615 | 1.000 |
| First cohabitation (time varying) | (period 1) | 2.508 | 1.000 | 2.609 | 1.000 | 0.492 | 0.913 | 0.976 | 0.998 |
| | (period 2) | 2.508 | 1.000 | 2.017 | 1.000 | 0.714 | 0.983 | 0.668 | 0.991 |
| | (period 3) | 2.508 | 1.000 | 4.587 | 1.000 | 0.023 | 0.061 | 0.203 | 0.639 |
| Marriage * cohabitation | (period 1) | -2.353 | 1.000 | -1.913 | 1.000 | | | | |
| | (period 2) | -2.353 | 1.000 | -1.913 | 1.000 | | | | |
| | (period 3) | -2.353 | 1.000 | -4.761 | 1.000 | | | | |
| <u>Education and job</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Student (time varying) | (period 1) | -0.759 | 0.979 | -0.526 | 0.911 | -0.601 | 0.928 | -0.467 | 0.870 |
| | (period 2) | -0.005 | 0.012 | -0.472 | 0.917 | -0.121 | 0.275 | -0.590 | 0.970 |
| | (period 3) | -0.101 | 0.239 | -0.605 | 0.947 | -0.044 | 0.104 | -0.681 | 0.969 |
| Graduated | (period 1) | -0.339 | 0.524 | -0.979 | 0.938 | -0.224 | 0.323 | -1.395 | 0.991 |
| | (period 2) | -0.210 | 0.466 | -0.573 | 0.977 | -0.099 | 0.207 | -0.719 | 0.993 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | (period 3) | 0.285 | 0.680 | 0.190 | 0.579 | 0.258 | 0.580 | 0.203 | 0.561 |
| Secondary school | (period 1) | -0.536 | 0.989 | -0.472 | 0.978 | -0.523 | 0.983 | -0.541 | 1.000 |
| | (period 2) | -0.181 | 0.603 | -0.497 | 0.994 | -0.209 | 0.666 | -0.541 | 1.000 |
| | (period 3) | 0.043 | 0.151 | 0.227 | 0.692 | 0.021 | 0.072 | 0.240 | 0.698 |
| Permanent contract job (time varying) | (period 1) | 0.065 | 0.276 | -0.414 | 0.956 | 0.049 | 0.205 | -0.443 | 0.965 |
| | (period 2) | -0.056 | 0.267 | -0.155 | 0.612 | -0.055 | 0.260 | -0.281 | 0.878 |
| | (period 3) | -0.056 | 0.267 | -0.025 | 0.093 | -0.055 | 0.260 | 0.006 | 0.021 |
| Fixed-term contr. Job (time varying) | (period 1) | -0.248 | 0.646 | -0.141 | 0.447 | -0.482 | 0.898 | -0.163 | 0.502 |
| | (period 2) | -0.083 | 0.253 | -0.211 | 0.672 | -0.014 | 0.043 | -0.274 | 0.789 |
| | (period 3) | 0.130 | 0.391 | 0.247 | 0.696 | 0.099 | 0.295 | 0.289 | 0.761 |
| <u>Family of origin</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Sibling 1 (ref. none) | (period 1) | 0.325 | 0.699 | -0.065 | 0.161 | 0.275 | 0.613 | 0.097 | 0.374 |
| | (period 2) | -0.004 | 0.010 | 0.076 | 0.238 | 0.011 | 0.043 | 0.097 | 0.374 |
| | (period 3) | 0.018 | 0.049 | -0.449 | 0.937 | 0.011 | 0.043 | -0.466 | 0.941 |
| Sibling 2 + (ref. none) | (period 1) | 0.628 | 0.970 | 0.251 | 0.613 | 0.580 | 0.952 | 0.431 | 0.976 |
| | (period 2) | -0.057 | 0.150 | 0.349 | 0.846 | 0.043 | 0.158 | 0.431 | 0.976 |
| | (period 3) | 0.039 | 0.105 | -0.589 | 0.981 | 0.043 | 0.158 | -0.578 | 0.974 |
| Father professional or manager when respondent was 16 (ref. no work or other) | (period 1) | 0.566 | 0.957 | 0.029 | 0.103 | -0.124 | 0.242 | -0.083 | 0.205 |
| | (period 2) | -0.184 | 0.488 | -0.778 | 0.999 | 0.009 | 0.018 | -0.831 | 0.988 |
| | (period 3) | 0.226 | 0.493 | -0.175 | 0.393 | 0.205 | 0.376 | -0.199 | 0.379 |
| Father white or blue collar when respondent was 16 (ref. no work or other) | (period 1) | -0.072 | 0.144 | 0.103 | 0.257 | 0.426 | 0.866 | -0.032 | 0.114 |
| | (period 2) | -0.060 | 0.124 | -0.733 | 0.980 | -0.087 | 0.234 | -0.805 | 0.999 |
| | (period 3) | 0.293 | 0.520 | -0.276 | 0.527 | 0.170 | 0.384 | -0.106 | 0.242 |
| Mother employed when respondent was 16 | (period 1) | -0.518 | 0.980 | 0.306 | 0.991 | -0.583 | 0.990 | 0.368 | 0.998 |
| | (period 2) | 0.257 | 0.913 | 0.306 | 0.991 | 0.263 | 0.913 | 0.368 | 0.998 |
| | (period 3) | 0.257 | 0.913 | -0.001 | 0.004 | 0.263 | 0.913 | 0.047 | 0.186 |
| Mother's education: >=secondary school diploma | (period 1) | -0.196 | 0.289 | 0.359 | 0.723 | -0.127 | 0.187 | 0.250 | 0.548 |
| | (period 2) | -0.276 | 0.773 | -0.180 | 0.649 | -0.585 | 0.861 | -0.036 | 0.100 |
| | (period 3) | -0.276 | 0.773 | -0.180 | 0.649 | 0.021 | 0.057 | -0.159 | 0.449 |
| High father religious attendance when respondent was 16 | (period 1) | 0.249 | 0.931 | -0.244 | 0.948 | 0.164 | 0.757 | -0.196 | 0.877 |
| | (period 2) | 0.249 | 0.931 | -0.244 | 0.948 | 0.164 | 0.757 | -0.196 | 0.877 |
| | (period 3) | -0.038 | 0.136 | 0.324 | 0.928 | -0.028 | 0.102 | 0.310 | 0.915 |
| <u>Partner</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Partner graduated | (period 1) | | | | | -0.439 | 0.645 | 0.449 | 0.799 |
| | (period 2) | | | | | -0.138 | 0.362 | -0.085 | 0.247 |
| | (period 3) | | | | | -0.310 | 0.787 | -0.095 | 0.345 |
| He older than her (ref. peers) | (period 1) | | | | | -0.346 | 0.728 | 0.831 | 0.939 |
| | (period 2) | | | | | 0.508 | 0.818 | -0.006 | 0.015 |
| | (period 3) | | | | | -0.365 | 0.647 | 0.455 | 0.864 |
| She older than him (ref. peers) | (period 1) | | | | | -0.464 | 0.966 | 0.505 | 0.933 |
| | (period 2) | | | | | 0.495 | 0.861 | -0.030 | 0.124 |
| | (period 3) | | | | | -0.115 | 0.320 | -0.060 | 0.207 |

The results shown in table A3 and not commented in the text, regard important characteristics for transition for adulthood, such as

1) the educational and job career of young people:

- Being a student delays, in all periods, the first birth, with a higher significance for women.
- Generally, a higher education level has a negative effect on the risk of having the first child, both for females and males – even controlling for educational level of the partner.
- Having a first job as permanent has a negative effect for females – therefore it delays the first birth. The effect is high and significant especially when they are younger than 26 years (decreasing for successive periods). However, the beginning of the first job does not have a significant effect for males. This can be explained with the fact that below the age of 26 the proportion of women having a child is very low and the more likely to have a child are non-working women.

2) Respondent's individual characteristics:

- As it was expected, young people living in Southern Italy are more likely to have a first child compared to those from the North. Among men, this effect goes against the delay of parenthood, because it is significant only in the first period (below the age of 29). Only for females, living in chief towns affects a delay of the first child. Religiosity both of respondent and of his/her father (when the respondent was 16) has mixed effects which are not easy to explain.

3) the characteristics of family of origin:

- The number of siblings has generally a positive effect, except for women above 30 (a difficult effect to explain).
- The occupational history of parents is also considered: mother's employment has a positive effect on females, leading to early childbearing, whereas it has a negative effect for males, but only for the first period. A father with a medium or high status job position (possibly a proxy for socio-economic status) seems to influence negatively female fertility and positively male level. A possible explanation can be a sort of higher opportunity cost for women from a higher socio-economic level and a "pure" income effect for males.