
BIRTH INTENTIONS AND SUBSEQUENT REALIZATIONS IN ITALY: A COUPLE'S APPROACH

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Motivations:

- ❑ Having a birth is a dyadic decision (Beckman 1984)
- ❑ The relevance of (male) partner's point of view in the analysis of fertility is well recognized in the literature (Ryder 1973)
- ❑ Only few studies have provided in-depth couple analysis of fertility (Thomson and Hoem 1998)
- ❑ Absence of a theory of couple fertility decision making process (Miller, Severy and Pasta 2004)

Overview of the literature (1 /2):

- ❑ Jointly decided couple intentions (Morgan 1985)

- ❑ Wives and husbands have equal influence on couples' childbearing (Thomson 1997)

- ❑ If there is couple disagreement, the resolution depends on:
 - 1) the type of the decision
 - 2) the gender equity
 - 3) the existing decision rule

Overview of the literature (2/2):

1. Type of decision:

Women tend to prevail in pro-fertility decisions

2. Gender equity:

Females may consider more relevant their own desires

Males treat their own desires as equal as that of their wives

3. Decision rules:

the power rule

the golden mean rule

the sphere of interest rule

the social drift rule

Aims of the study:

Analysis of the couples childbearing behaviour

a) Role of the both partners' intentions

a.1) Prevailing view of one of the partners

Data:

Longitudinal survey on "Famiglie e soggetti sociali" carried out by the Italian National Statistical Office in 2003 and 2007

Analytical sample: 2446 couples where:

1. Both partners are aged between 20 and 49 at the first wave
2. One of the partners was re-interviewed at the second wave
3. Both partners answered to the child-timing intention question in 2003

Defining fertility intentions:

Survey questions:

ROUND 2003:

1. Do you intend to have a child during the next 3 years?

ROUND 2007:

2.a Have you had a child in the last 3 years?

2.b Have you adopted a child in the last 3 years?

Defining couple disagreement:

Intention to have a child in the next 3 years

	HE	Definitely not	Probably not	Probably yes	Definitely yes
SHE					
Definitely not		agreement	disagreement	disagreement	disagreement
Probably not		agreement	disagreement	disagreement	disagreement
Probably yes		disagreement	disagreement	agreement	disagreement
Definitely yes		disagreement	disagreement	agreement	disagreement

Defining couple disagreement:

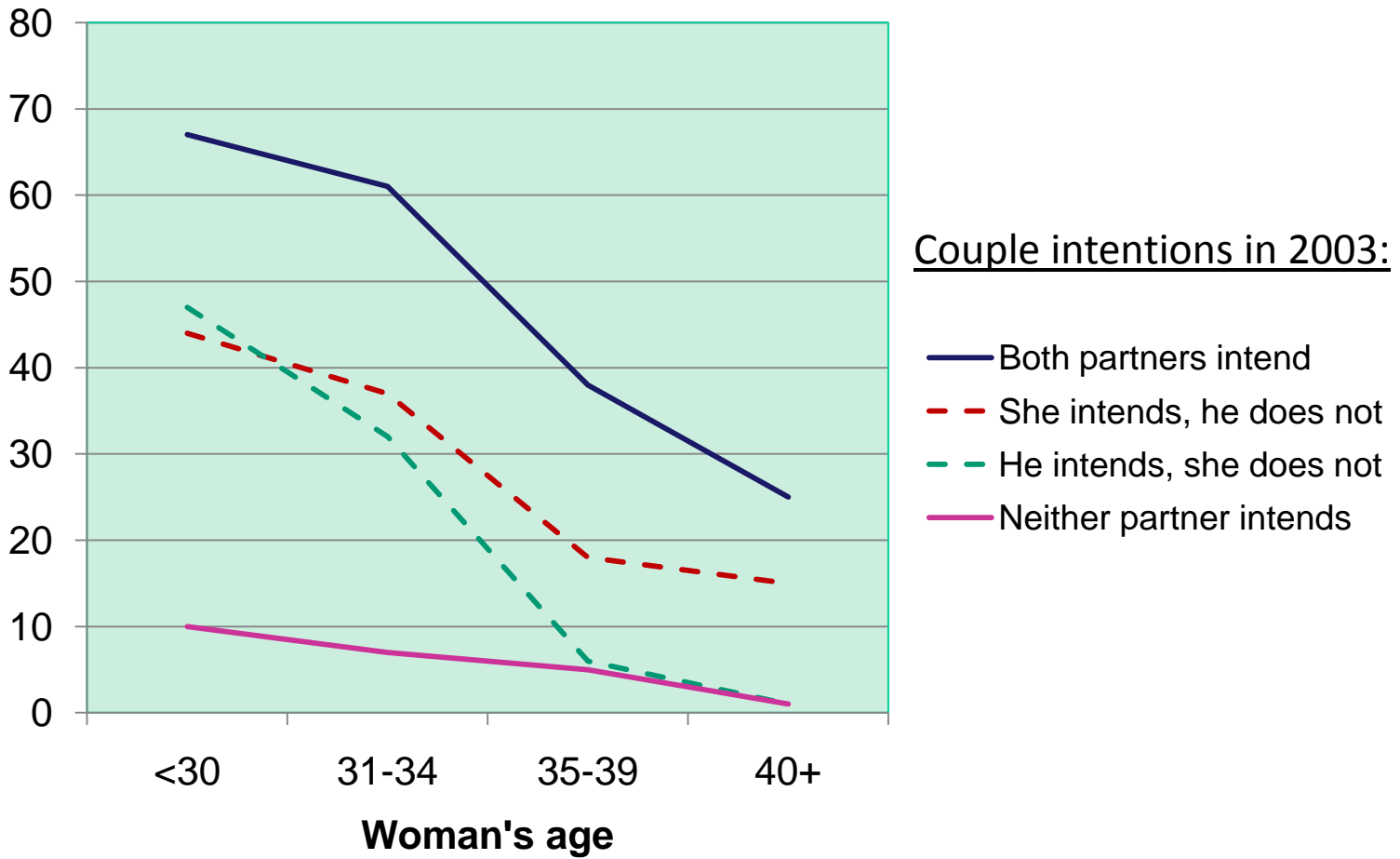
Intention to have a child in the next 3 years

	HE	Definitely not	Probably not	Probably yes	Definitely yes
SHE					
Definitely not		agreement	disagreement		
Probably not				disagreement	
Probably yes					disagreement
Definitely yes		disagreement			

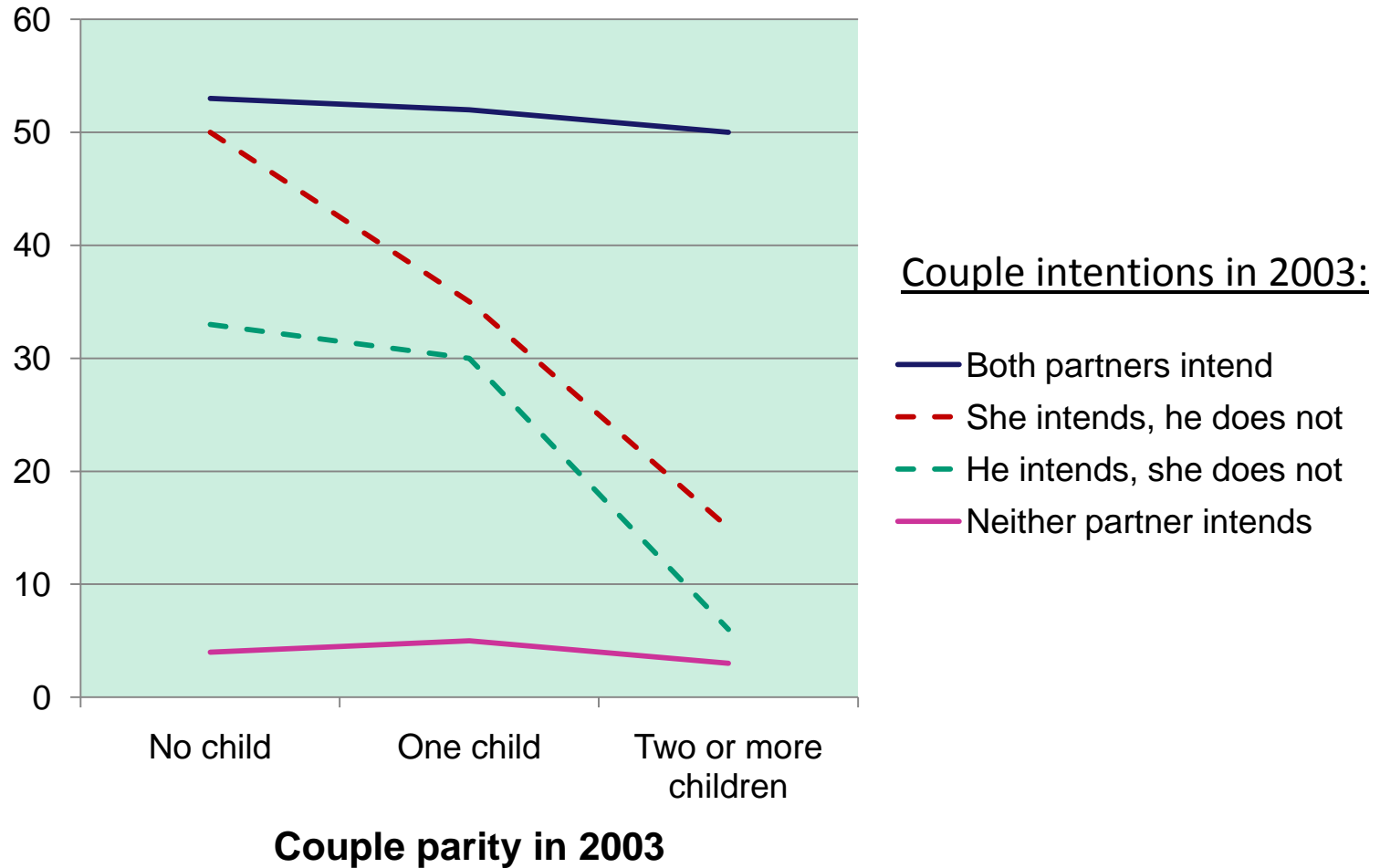
COUPLE CHILD-TIMING INTENTIONS AND REALIZATION

COUPLE INTENTIONS	Distribution in 2003 (%)		% Had a child in 2003-2007	
	Childless	Parents	Childless	Parents
Both intend	67	14	53	52
Only woman intends	4	3	50	25
Only man intends	4	4	33	19
Neither intends	25	79	4	3

SHARE OF COUPLES HAVING A CHILD IN 2003-2007



SHARE OF COUPLES HAVING A CHILD IN 2003-2007

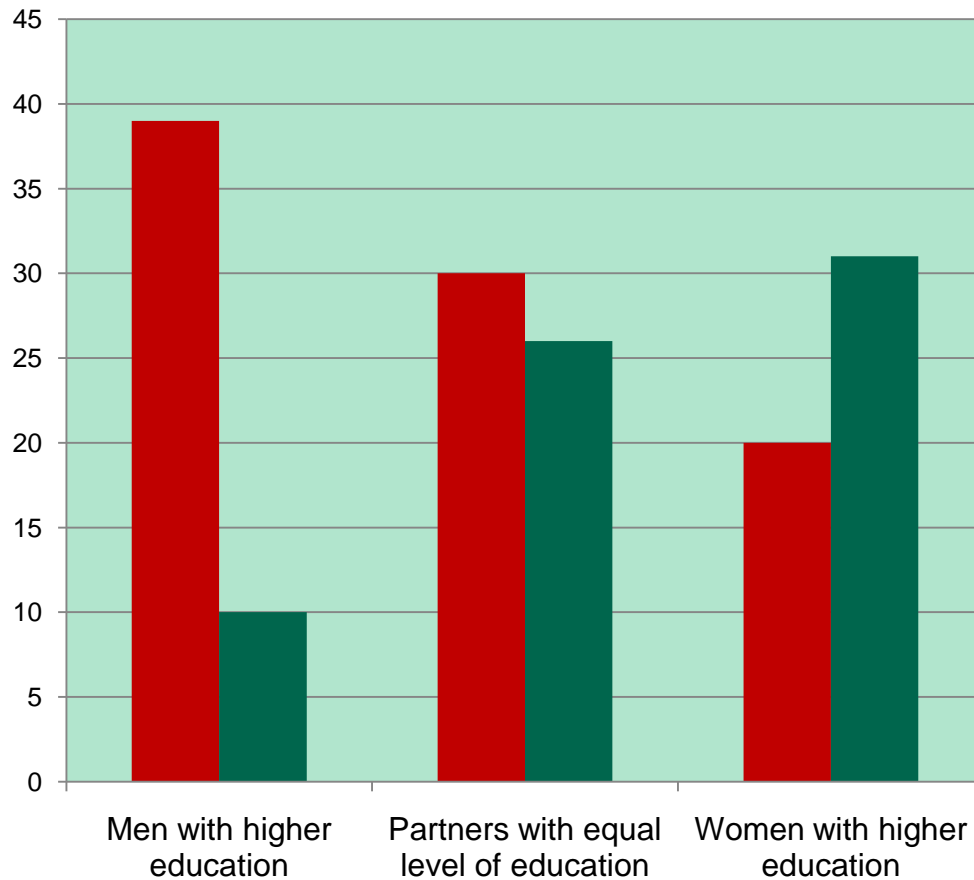


Logistic regression analysis

	ODDS RATIOS on <u>having a child</u> in 2003-2007					
Couple intentions in 2003	Couple's parity in 2003					
	<i>Parity 0</i>		<i>Parity 1</i>		<i>Parity 2+</i>	
Both intend (ref.)	1		1		1	
Only woman intends	0.86		0.46		0.20	*
Only man intends	0.40		0.39	*	0.06	**
Neither intends	0.06	***	0.12	***	0.04	***

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

SHARE OF COUPLES HAVING A CHILD IN 2003-2007



Couple intentions in 2003:

- She intends, he not
- He intends, she not

Summary:

1. Partners' disagreement about whether having or not a(n additional) child tend to bring to a middle outcome
2. The impact of couple disagreement on childbearing is parity specific
3. If partners disagree, women tend to prevail
4. The sphere of interest rule seems to predominate

Caveat:

- ❖ Interpretation of discrepancy in partners' reports:
 - The responses on child-timing intentions may reflect already a resolution of the partners' interaction (Ajzen 1991; Miller 1994).
 - The concept of intended pregnancy may be applied by women only if there is a partner's consent on it (Barrett and Wellings 2002).

Implications:

1. Importance of couple fertility analysis
2. Child-timing intentions are not the most suitable variable
3. Need for more detailed information



THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMENTS!