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Albanian, Romanian and Italian women's fertility intentions: a comparative analysis among migrants, stayers and natives

Le intenzioni di fecondità delle donne albanesi, rumene e italiane: un'analisi comparativa tra migranti, non-migranti e nativi

Thaís García-Pereiro and Anna Paterno

Abstract This paper analyses fertility intentions of Albanian and Romanian women in Italy following an origin-destination perspective. Short-term intentions to have a child of Albanian and Romanian women living in Italy are compared not only to those of Italian women (host country) but also to those of stayers in sending countries (Albania, Romania). To account for differences and similarities among groups, the final dataset mixes microdata coming from several sources (FFS and SCIF for Italy, DHS for Albania, Eurobarometer for Romania). Ordinal regression models on fertility intentions of natives, migrants and stayers are aimed at testing theoretical models of adaptation and socialization, while controlling for independent variables that literature has proven important determinants of the intention to have one or another child.

Abstract *Questo articolo analizza le intenzioni di fecondità delle donne albanesi e romene immigrate in Italia adottando una prospettiva che considera sia l'origine sia la destinazione. Si comparano le intenzioni di avere un figlio a breve termine delle donne albanesi e rumene che vivono in Italia non solo con quelle delle donne italiane (paese ospitante) ma anche con quelle delle donne rimaste nei paesi di origine (Albania, Romania). Per tenere conto delle differenze e delle analogie tra i gruppi, il dataset finale unisce microdati provenienti da diverse fonti (FFS e SCIF per l'Italia,*

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DHS per l'Albania, Eurobarometro per la Romania). I modelli di regressione ordinale sulle intenzioni di fecondità di native, migranti e non-migranti sono volti a testare la validità delle teorie note come "adaptation" e "socialization", controllando al contempo variabili indipendenti che la letteratura ha dimostrato importanti determinanti delle intenzioni di avere uno o un altro figlio.

Key words: fertility intentions, natives, migrants, stayers, Italy, data linkage.

Introduction

The literature on migrant fertility in Europe has significantly grown in recent years (De Valk and Liefbroer, 2007; Mussino and Strozza, 2012; Kleinepier et al., 2015; Robards and Berrington, 2016; Impicciatore et al., 2020; Tønnessen and Mussino, 2020; Lindström et al., 2020). However, as stated by Puur et al. (2018), studies on migrant fertility have neither sufficiently stressed differences between migrants' and natives' reproductive decision-making processes nor considered the link between fertility intentions and the migratory background. There are some empirical analyses about migrants' fertility intentions (Carlsson, 2018; Mussino et al., 2021; Alderotti and Trappolini, 2021) but, to the best of our knowledge, only the study by Puur et al. (2018) intentionally developed an origin-destination perspective comparing Russian women living in Estonia, Estonians in the host country and Russians in the country of origin, applying the one-origin and one-destination approach.

This paper is aimed at contributing to the existing literature by filling the need of studies on fertility intentions using a comparative origin-destination perspective while disentangling and quantifying the influence of adaptation and socialization theories on fertility intentions of natives, Albanian and Romanian migrants (long and short term), and stayers (non-migrants).

Theoretical background and hypotheses in brief

Our aim is to verify if the adaptation and socialization theoretical approaches fit in order to describe differences on fertility intentions between Italian women, migrants (Albanian and Romanian women) in Italy and non-migrants (stayers) in their countries of origin (Albania and Romania). Therefore, we formulate the following research hypotheses:

RH1 Adaptation. According to the adaptation perspective, migrants' reproductive choices in the host countries tend to become similar to those of natives over time (Kulu 2005, Gabrielli et al. 2007). If this hypothesis prevails, long-term migrants' fertility intentions will be like those of comparable Italians.

RH2 Socialization. For the socialization perspective, the social environment experienced during childhood strongly impacts future reproductive decisions. Thus,

Albanian, Romanian and Italian women's fertility intentions: a comparative perspective among migrants, stayers and natives

socialization norms and values experienced in the country of origin will tend to prevail (Andersson, 2004; Kulu and Milewski, 2007). If this hypothesis prevails, fertility intentions of both short-term and long-term migrants will resemble those of comparable stayers and differ from those of Italians.

We are fully aware of the importance of other theoretical approaches (e.g. the selection and disruption theories) in explaining reproductive behaviours following migration (Kulu, 2005; Milewski, 2010; Mussino and Strozza, 2012; Wolf and Mulder, 2019). We were not able to test for selection given data availability, while, regarding disruption, we are planning to search for differences considering recently arrived migrants in a successive phase of our research. We also consider that any combination of our research hypotheses can be verified, given that adaptation and socialization might not be mutually exclusive theories.

Data and methods

Data were drawn from several sources.

1. Natives (n = 4,276): Families, Social Subjects and Life Cycle (FSS) survey, conducted in 2016 by the Italian Institute of Statistics (ISTAT),
2. Migrants (Albanian and Romanian women living in Italy) (n = 2,476): Social Condition and Integration of Foreign Citizens (SCIF) survey again carried out by ISTAT between 2011-2012.
3. Albanian stayers (n = 7,852): last available Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) conducted in 2017/2018 by the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT).
4. Romanian stayers (n = 210): Eurobarometer 75.4 survey conducted in 2011.

Only comparable information was harmonized in one unique dataset. The final sample was restricted to 14,814 women aged 18-44 due to data limitations and models included harmonized variables.

Our dependent variable is respondents' intentions to have a child within the next three years coded in: intended to have a(nother) child, undecided, and not intended to have a(nother) child. Migrants were further distinguished according to the length of their stay in Italy in two categories (recent migrants: ten years or less since migration; and long-term migrants: more than 10 years). Our main independent variable is a combination of the migratory background and the length of stay of migrant women, coded 1 for Italian, 2 for Albanian who are long term migrants, 3 for Albanian who are short term migrants, 4 for Romanian who are long term migrants, 5 for Romanian who are short term migrants, and 6 and 7 respectively for Albanian and Romanian stayers.

We estimated ordinal regression models considering migratory background as the main independent variable and other independent variables already identified by the literature as important determinants of fertility intentions (Carlsson, 2018; Puur et al., 2018; Mussino et al., 2021): age groups (18-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44), parity

(childless, 1, 2 and 3 or more), partnership status (never married, married, not married), educational attainment (primary or less, secondary¹, tertiary) and labour market status (employed, unemployed, inactive). For a more accurate interpretation of our results, we also computed adjusted predictions for prototypical cases (by migratory background, at mean values). Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of dependent and independent variables included in empirical analyses.

Independent variables	Fertility intentions			
	Intended	Undecided	Not intended	
Migratory background	Italian	8.67 (7.3)	46.26 (47.05)	28.76 (45.42)
	Albanian LongTmig	0.81 (9.12)	3.06 (40.43)	2.46 (50.46)
	Albanian ShortTmig	2.29 (21.52)	4.46 (49.11)	1.72 (29.37)
	Romanian LongTmig	0.94 (12.11)	2.74 (41.18)	2.00 (46.71)
	Romanian ShortTmig	6.60 (16.75)	16.26 (48.33)	7.57 (39.43)
	Albanian stayer	80.12 (37.89)	26.35 (18.20)	55.26 (71.90)
	Romanian stayer	0.57 (10.00)	0.87 (29.36)	2.24 (45.58)
Age groups	18-24	44.20 (48.51)	23.22 (29.86)	10.84 (21.64)
	25-29	27.07 (39.46)	21.75 (37.14)	8.83 (23.40)
	30-34	17.40 (25.06)	21.75 (36.70)	14.60 (38.25)
	35-39	8.32 (11.80)	18.33 (30.44)	22.39 (57.75)
	40-45	3.02 (3.04)	14.95 (17.62)	43.34 (79.34)
Parity	Childless	59.33 (39.15)	53.21 (41.12)	16.44 (19.73)
	1	29.49 (36.55)	23.06 (33.48)	13.30 (29.97)
	2	9.80 (8.86)	19.11 (20.23)	43.13 (70.90)
	3+	1.37 (2.45)	4.62 (9.64)	27.13 (87.91)
Partnership status	Never married	43.13 (31.95)	51.12 (44.44)	17.56 (23.61)
	Married	51.95 (21.98)	42.01 (20.86)	74.45 (57.16)
	Not married	4.91 (17.89)	6.87 (29.35)	7.99 (52.77)
Labour market status	Employed	37.71 (21.27)	49.18 (32.49)	45.08 (46.24)
	Unemployed and other situation	62.29 (28.10)	50.82 (26.85)	54.92 (45.05)
Educational attainment	Primary or less	25.32 (25.14)	12.35 (14.36)	33.50 (60.50)
	Secondary	40.24 (19.34)	61.99 (34.90)	52.34 (45.75)
	Tertiary	34.45 (38.17)	25.66 (33.30)	14.16 (28.53)
Source	FSS2016_IT	8.67 (7.53)	46.26 (47.05)	28.76 (45.42)
	SCIF2011/12_IT	10.64 (15.95)	26.51 (46.57)	13.74 (37.48)
	DHS2017_AL	80.12 (37.89)	26.35 (14.60)	55.26 (47.52)
	EB2011_RO	0.57 (10.00)	0.87 (18.10)	2.24 (71.90)
<i>N</i>	<i>14,814</i>	<i>3,713</i>	<i>4,349</i>	<i>6,752</i>

Notes: column percentages, (row percentages).

Preliminary results

In the first part of this section, we focus our attention on the association between our main independent variable of interest, the migratory background, and fertility intentions². Table 2 reports average marginal effects (AMEs) of native, migrant (short

¹ DHS data did not allow to further distinguish among levels of secondary education.

² According to our results, control variables positively affecting the intention to have another child are having a partner and holding a higher educational level, while this intention is negatively affected by increasing age, parity and being unemployed. Results are not shown here but available upon request.

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and long term) and stayer women on the probability of declaring a specific category of their short-term fertility intentions.

In general, results show that migrant women are more likely to intend to have a(nother) child than Italian women. Considering the greatest differences between migrants and Italian women, Albanian short-term migrants were almost 7% more likely to want to have a child (first included) than Italians. The probability of wanting a child was always higher than Italians, but considerably lower than for Albanian short-term migrants, for Albanian long-term migrants, Romanian short-term migrants and Romanian long-term migrants, in this order. Albanian non-migrants were around 18% more prone to intend to have a child in the next three years than Italian women, while Romanian stayers were 4% less likely than native women.

Table 2: Average marginal effects coming from ordinal regression models on fertility intentions by migratory background.

Migratory background	Fertility intentions	AME	sig.
<i>Ref. Italian</i>			
Albanian LongTmig	Not intended	-.108	***
	Undecided	.073	***
	Intended	.035	***
Albanian ShortTmig	Not intended	-.189	***
	Undecided	.120	***
	Intended	.069	***
Romanian LongTmig	Not intended	-.076	**
	Undecided	.052	**
	Intended	.023	**
Romanian ShortTmig	Not intended	-.092	***
	Undecided	.063	***
	Intended	.029	***
Albanian stayer	Not intended	-.351	***
	Undecided	.176	***
	Intended	.176	***
Romanian stayer	Not intended	.191	***
	Undecided	-.148	***
	Intended	-.043	***

To directly compare all migratory categories among them, we computed adjusted predictions for prototypical cases, holding control variables at their mean values as presented in Figure 1. As aimed at comparing seven different groups, we plotted prediction for one outcome only: being intended to have a (or another) child.

Focusing on Albanian women, the intentions to have a child differ between long-term and short-term migrants, with a probability around 11% and 15%, respectively. For Albanian stayers the likelihood of wanting another child is much higher than for migrants, being approximately 24%. All these figures are higher than those observed among Italian women and Romanian migrants.

Turning the attention to this last group, differences between short and long-term migrants become less evident (8% for the first and 9% for the second). However, the probability of being intended to have a child is significantly higher than the one observed among stayers (3-4%) but slightly higher than for Italian women (6%).

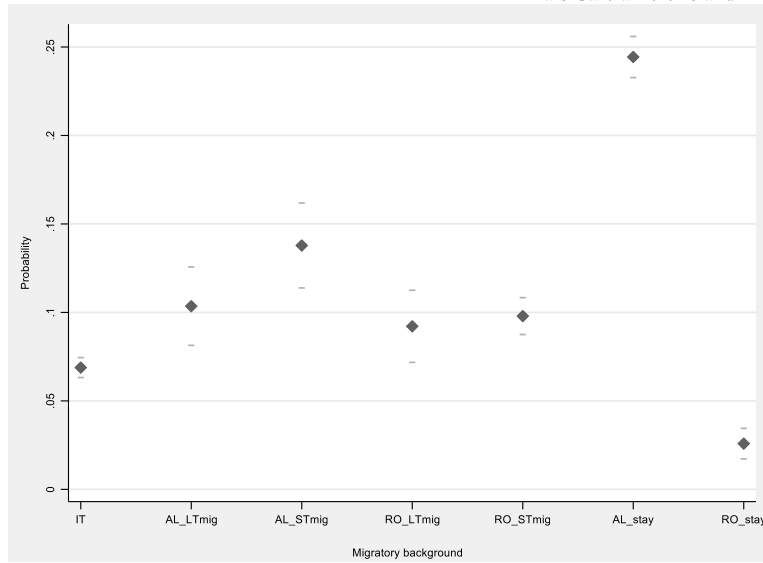


Figure 1: Adjusted predictions for being intended to have a (another) child by migratory background (95% confidence intervals) while holding control variables at their mean values.

Notes: own elaboration merged data.

Brief discussion of findings

As previous research considering fertility behaviors of migrant women in Italy (Mussino and Strozza 2012, Impicciatore et al. 2020, Mussino et al. 2021, Alderotti and Trappolini 2021), our results show that fertility intentions differ between natives and Albanian and Romanian migrants and stayers, but also among Albanian migrants, when considering time passed since migration.

The likelihood of wanting a (another child) of Romanian migrant women, independently of the duration of the stay, is similar to the likelihood of Italian women, but much higher than the one observed for stayers. These results are guiding us to find support for our first research hypothesis, *Adaptation*, that seems to fit well in the case of Romanian migrant women.

Mixed results are found for migrants coming from Albania. On one hand, Albanian migrant women are more likely to want to have a(nother) child than Italian (and Romanian) women, while Albanian stayers have the highest probability of wanting another child. This is supporting our second research hypothesis, *Socialization*, which seem to resemble -more accurately- fertility intentions of Albanian women when compared to stayers and natives. On the other, short-term migrants are more prone to want a child than long-term migrants, whose fertility intentions tend to resemble those of Italian women. This finding, instead, is in line with our first research hypothesis, *Adaptation*, given that fertility intentions of Albanian women tend to converge to those of Italian women as their length of stay in Italy increases.

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These results might be reflecting current fertility behaviours of migrant populations, especially when we look at the values of group-specific Total Fertility Rates (TFR), but not only. In the case of Romanian women living in Italy, their TFR is higher than the one of women living in Romania, and this also holds for their fertility intentions. When analyzing migrants from this country, we must also take into account that their fertility intentions and outcomes might also be related to the elevated share of mixed unions, in particular, of Romanian women married to Italian men. Regarding Albanian women, their TFR tend to be much higher than the one registered among Romanian women, holding a level much more similar to the one of Italian women but lower than non-migrants period fertility (Mussino and Strozza, 2012).

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