

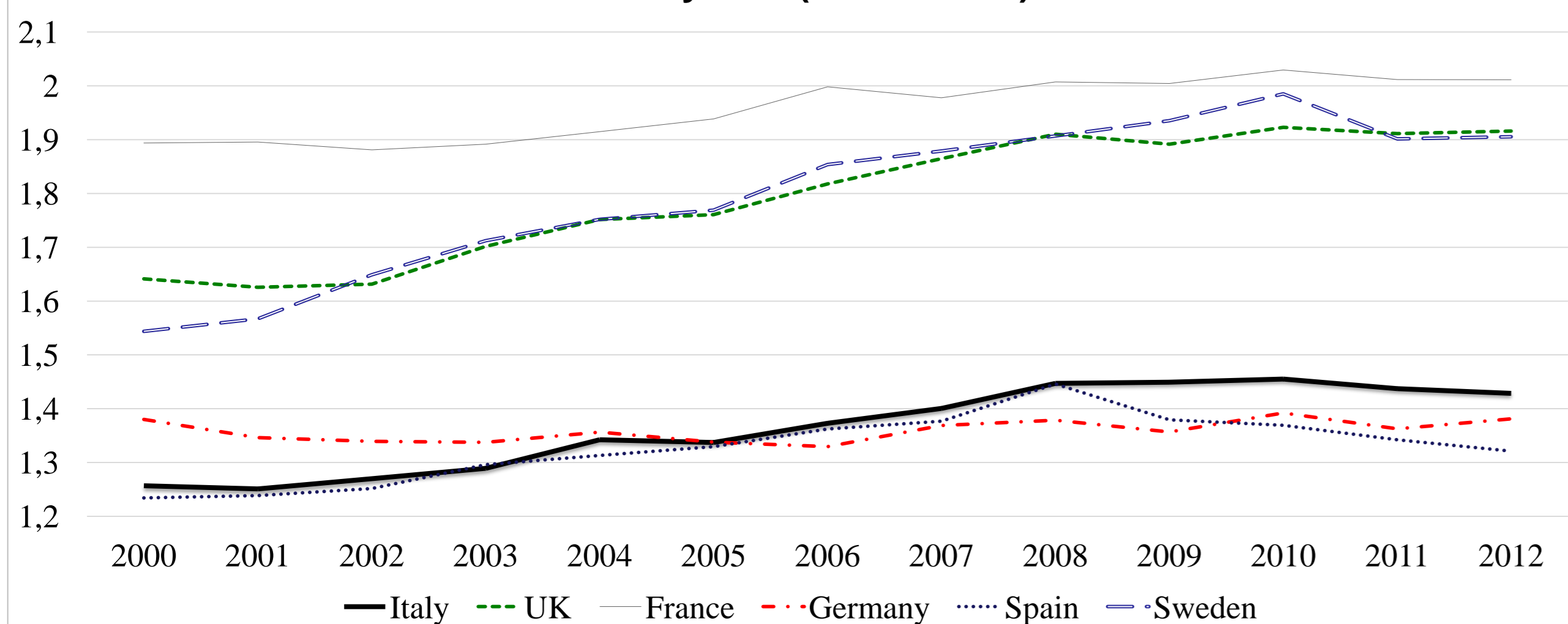
Education and the Difference between Fertility Desires and Fertility Expectations in Italy

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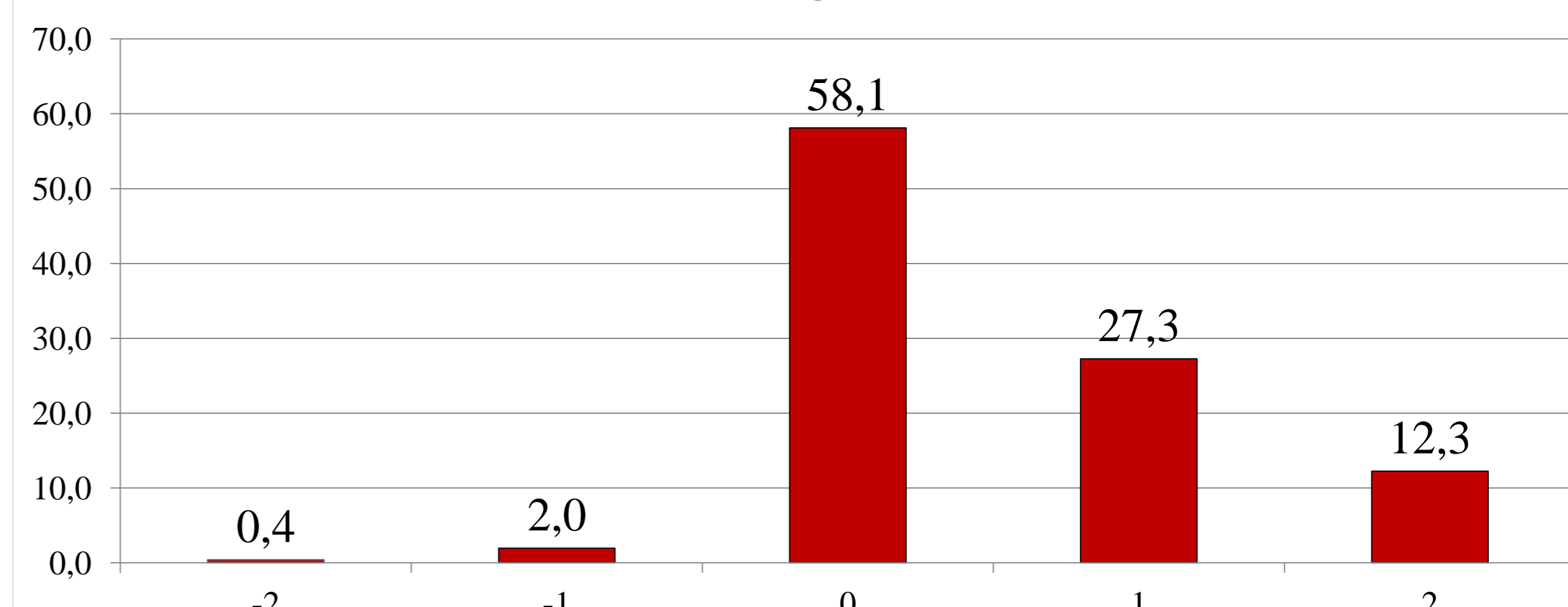
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Italy is characterized by persistent **low levels of TFR, around 1.4**. Births are increasingly concentrated at higher ages. In the past decade, TFR has been slightly increasing in the North, while it has been continuously declining in the South [1]

Fertility rate (EUROSTAT)



Difference between the number of desired and expected children. Women and men aged 18 to 29. Values in per cent.



Aim: identify the differential predictors of fertility desires and expectations as well as the obstacles which prevent young Italians aged 18 to 29 to translate their desires in concrete reproductive plans

Method: ordinal logistic regressions models on fertility desires, fertility expectations, and the difference between desires and expectations

DATA

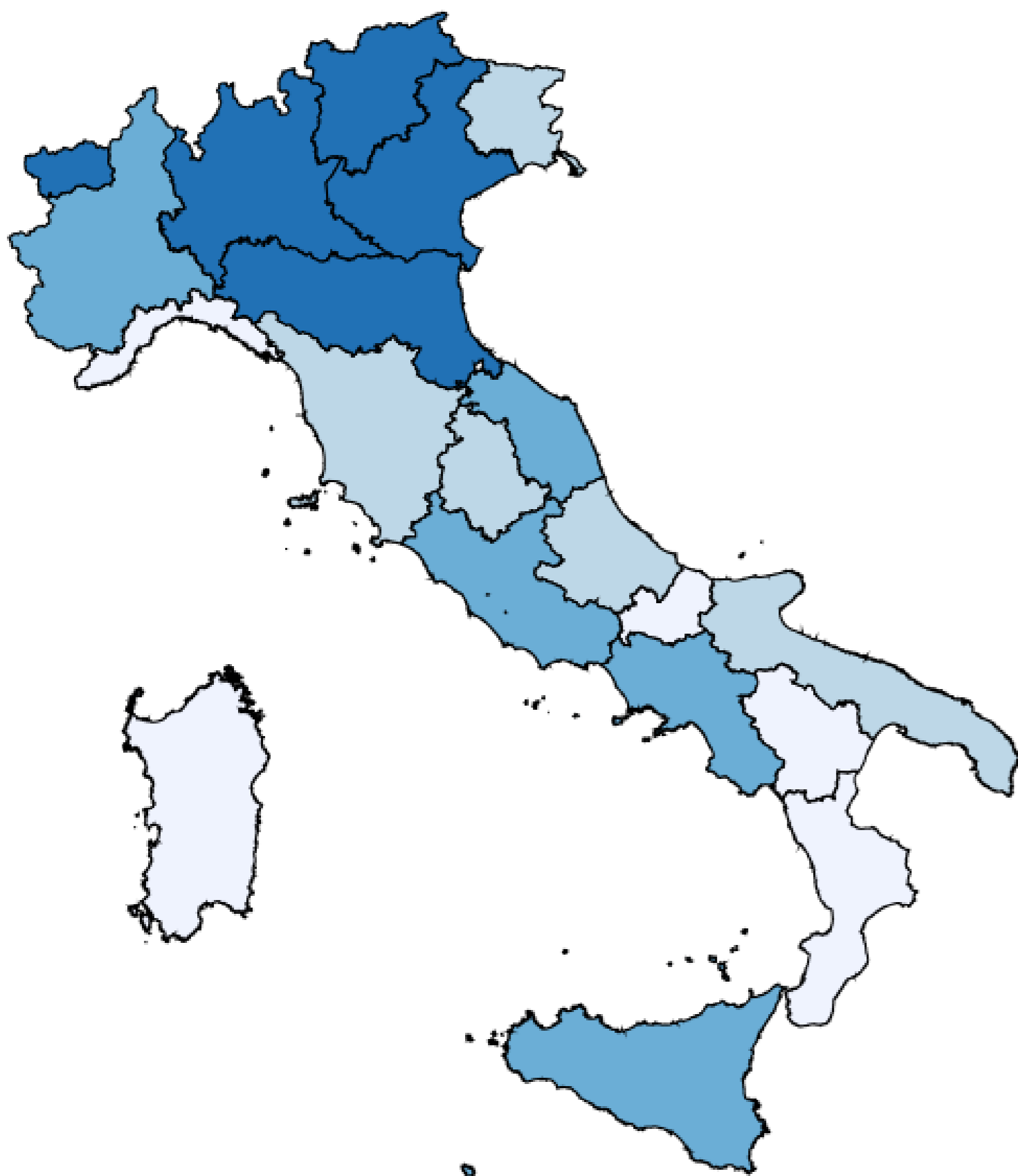
Data: "Rapporto Giovani" which is a project promoted by Istituto Superiore Giuseppe Toniolo, in collaboration with Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. The survey provides information of a variety of fields ranging from values, future expectations [4], projects and life choices of young people, their trust in institutions and their role in the society. Our analysis relies on a sample of 9,087 individuals collected in 2012.

EXPLANATORY VARIABLES

The explanatory variables include: gender, age, marital status, **education**, employment, religion, **geographic area**, parent's level of education and attitudes towards childbearing.

FERTILITY IN THE FUTURE

TFR in Italy. Year 2011



Legend for TFR in Italy (2011):
 (1.43, 1.59]
 (1.39, 1.43]
 (1.29, 1.39]
 (1.14, 1.29]

DESIRES

EXPECTATIONS

GAP BETWEEN DESIRES AND EXPECTATIONS

VARIABLES

"If you do not have any constraints or impediment of any kind, how many children would you like to have?"

"Realistically, how many children would you like to have during your entire life?"

Difference between the number of desired children without any constraints or impediments and the number realistically expected

Level of education	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Primary	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Secondary	0.371***	0.369***	0.139**	0.040	0.443***	0.461***
Tertiary	0.507***	0.541***	0.286***	0.011	0.423***	0.694***

Residential area	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
South	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Center	-0.0287***	-0.400***	-0.402***	-0.511***	0.108	0.010
North	-0.468***	-0.342***	-0.594***	-0.475***	0.022	0.079

Our results support the hypothesis that **education is positively associated with the demand for children:**

- Education is positively correlated with the desires for children but not with the expected number of children among women;
- The gap between desired and expected family size increases with level of education especially among women;

Interpretation: Women with a higher level of education tend to be more oriented towards professional achievement and desire larger family size but they are also aware of the difficulties they will face in combining work with family size preferences and thus adjust consistently their reproductive choices [2];

Results:

Results related to the **explanatory variables:**

- Age is negatively associated with the number of expected children and with the difference between desires and expectations [3];
- Being religious influences positively both the desired and the expected number of children;
- Being in the condition of NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) negatively influences the number of expected children [4].

References: [1] Rosina A., Caltabiano M. Where, in which way and to what extent can[3] Régnier-Loilier A., Vignoli D., *Fertility intentions and obstacles to their realization in Italian fertility grow in the next fifteen years?* *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal* France and in Italy Population, 66(2):361-389, 2011

[2] Del Boca D., Rosina A., *Famiglie Sole. Sopravvivere con un welfare inefficiente.* Il Mulino, Bologna, 2009.

[4] Lutz W., Skirbekk, V., Testa M., *The low fertility trap hypothesis: Forces that may lead to further postponement and fewer births in Europe.* Vienna Yearbook of Population Research, 67-192, 2006.