

Chapter 1 : Livelihood: Working Family Trends

The study of dual-earner families has been of special interest to the authors for several years. This topic combines concerns for social welfare, the economic status of families, and numerous public policy issues that will have increasing importance through the s.

Wir haben are, in relative terms, the most common kind festgestellt, dass in Italien zwar relativ weni- within them. The volle Laufbahn verfolgen. Dual-career couples are a specific sub- group of dual-earner couples, and comprise couples in which both partners not only are in paid work, but are at the top of the occupational ladder. Adopting a class ap- proach to the study of occupational stratification, and following the class schema developed by Robert Erikson and John Goldthorpe , for the purposes of this study we consider a couple to be dual-career when both partners have an occupation belonging to class I or II; that is, to the service class entrepreneurs, professionals, managers of large and medium-size firms and to the higher grades of white-collar workers. One could object that this operational definition of dual-career couples is too broad because white-collar jobs cannot properly be classified as top occupational positions. Theoretical and empirical considerations, however, can justify this deci- sion. Although the market position in the sense of Lockwood of higher grades of non-manual employees, in fact, is weaker than that of members of the service class, their employment relation in the sense of Goldthorpe and Rose is pretty much the same. Members of the white-collar class are hired on the basis of a service contract and not on the basis of a labour contract or a mixed con- tract, which is the case, respectively, for manual workers and the lower grades of routine non-manual employees. As for men, The percentage is higher, These male rates have been stable over the last half century Bison Lucchini et al.: Dual-earner and dual-career couples in contemporary Italy that recorded in most European Union countries. First, there are wide regional differences: Moreover, part-time jobs, which might help women to combine work and family responsibilities during the most demanding phases of family formation, are still comparatively scarce in Italy, though they have increased in number over the past fifteen years following a change in regulations. Second, the familistic and undeveloped Italian welfare system does not ade- quately support families and women with children Saraceno The supply of care services for children under age three is not only quite varied at the regional level, but generally among the most modest in Europe Plantenga and Remery This share has doubled since the early s, however, following an increase in the supply of public and private services. Third, there is still a strong asymmetry between husbands and wives in the divi- sion of domestic labour. On average, Italian married women spend 6. According to comparative data on time-use, Italian men are the least collaborative among Europe- ans with regard to family work, and Italian working women, together with their Slovenian counterparts, have the longest workday if one counts both paid work and family work Eurostat ; ISTAT , ch. This gender disparity in the amount of efforts expended for domestic well-being is generally stable across areas of residence, birth cohorts, and the labour market positions of both partners. Only highly educated wives in high occupational positions seem to be able to reduce the amount of time devoted daily to domestic tasks Schizzerotto And when such a reduction is achieved, it is not because their husbands are more sensitive to gender inequalities and thus increase their own domestic commitment, but rather simply be- cause these couples can afford to pay for household help. In Italy, however, the gender gap in education was closed only in the late s s " about ten years later than in most advanced European countries see De Sandre ; Schizzerotto This means that only in the past thirty years could a sizeable proportion of Italian couples et al. And women, in particu- lar, had the educational characteristics that favoured their labour market attachment throughout the family formation years. Even defined in our very broad terms, dual-career couples represent a minority of dual-earner couples in any country. In Italy, however, there are specific constrains. During the last twenty years, the development of the tertiary sector and the process of occupational upgrading have proceeded quite slowly. Furthermore, the overall rate of intra- generational mobility is definitely lower than that recorded in most developed socie- ties, and the career chances of women are, ceteris paribus, far smaller than those of men Cobalti and Schizzerotto ; Pisati and Schizzerotto , ; Schizzerotto ; Sabbadini ; Almalaurea For instance, fewer female than male uni- versity

graduates hold a job at the level of their qualification: These gender differences limit the possibility of forming a dual-career couple even in the broad sense indicated above. If we had used a narrower definition, including only couples in which both partners have clear upward professional mobility as a consequence of strategic professional and educational choices taken over the life course. The features of the Italian context summarized above allow us to critically examine the prevalent theories concerning the mechanisms that facilitate or hinder the formation of dual-earner couples and of their subgroup, dual-career couples. Theories and Hypothesis In the current sociological literature, three main groups of theories aim at explaining the process of formation of dual-earner and dual-career couples and their persistence over time. Some women strongly prefer to perform conjugal and parental roles, whereas others wish to invest in a professional career. When they get married, the former will leave the labour market or reduce their commitment in it, whereas the latter will continue to invest in their career. Dual-earner and dual-career couples in contemporary Italy returns in the labour market, he specializes in performing market work, while she specializes in family work. Over time, this specialization becomes increasingly convenient from the point of view of the household if, of course, nothing wrong happens to either spouse, or to their relationship. Fabrizio Bernardi uses this approach to explain the existence of dual-career couples. According to him, husbands possessing a large amount of human capital and placed at the top of the occupational ladder can boost or even provide career opportunities for their well-educated working wives in order to improve the standard of living of the entire family. The resource bargaining theory holds that this decision represents the outcome of negotiations, which are based in the resources of power controlled by each partner. Rather, the level of schooling of these wives offsets the potentially negative impact of having highly educated husbands who usually earn more and therefore give priority to their own career and labour market investment see also Bielby and Bielby By remaining in the labour force, these women further enhance their human capital and reduce, even if they do not completely eliminate, the negative impact on wages and career of the time they invest in motherhood and family work Hersch and Stratton The available empirical knowledge on the Italian context offers little support both to the preference theory and to the theory of the optimality of decisions; it provides stronger support to the resource bargaining theory. Italian women with family responsibilities appear to be divided into two groups: The incidence of the two clusters of women across geographical areas and social groups, however, casts some doubt on this theory. First, the proportion of married women in the labour market changes strongly according to the macroeconomic situation of their area of residence. Married women living in the most developed Italian regions display much higher activity rates than their counterparts residing in less developed areas, particularly in the South ISTAT ; Sabbadini But the comparatively high incidence of working wives and mothers in the Central-North regions, where labour demand is higher and social services are more abundant, suggests that options and resources are as important as individual preferences. The higher the school qualifications of a married woman, the greater the likelihood that she will remain employed throughout the family formation years Lo Conte and Prati The same holds in the case of occupational position. The more advantageous the position, the greater the probability that women will remain in the labour market after marriage and childbirth. Although it is true, that Italian women who are less educated and thus possess a lower amount of human capital than their partners are less likely to participate in the labour market than those who have the same level of education Bernardi , the opposite is not true. When wives are more educated than their husbands, the latter do not assume the main responsibility for unpaid household work and care. At best, wives can buy themselves out of some of it. Sharing an equal level of education and being in the labour market also does not cause a symmetrical sharing of household and care work Romano ; Schizzerotto The decrease in the gender asymmetry in time spent in family work found in Italy, as in other countries Baxter ; Brines , among couples where women are highly educated and in the labour market, is more the result of women decreasing the time devoted to family work than of men increasing it. And a non-traditional gender imbalance in human capital may even cause the strengthening of the traditional imbalance in family work. In this study, we test this theory by means of a set of specific hypotheses that can be summarized as follows: Second, family events, namely, childbirth and child-rearing, represent the main barrier to the continuity of the labour market participation of Italian wives; married working women who are highly educated and at the

top of the occupational ladder are in a far better position to elude this risk than are all other working wives. Third, the work histories of Italian wives are almost completely independent of those of their husbands. Fourth, the formation of dual-career couples is not a process that starts after marriage, but before it. In other words, we hypothesize that it is the high level of homogamy with respect to education, occupation, and, even more, social origin that drives the formation of dual-career couples, and not specific joint strategies followed by wives and husbands after marriage. Before testing these hypotheses, we provide some descriptive statistics intended to give basic information on the numbers and characteristics of dual-earner and dual-career couples in contemporary Italy. Data, variables, and methods

The data used to assess the proportion of dual-earner and dual-career couples and to test the above hypotheses come from the 1983, 1990, and 1997 waves of the Italian Longitudinal Household Study ILFI. This study is a perspective panel with a first retrospective wave. It is carried out on a national representative sample of about ten thousand Italian men and women aged 18 and more and belonging to about 4,000 households. In the following analyses we have used information regarding a school participation events, b labour market events, c family events, and d geo-graphical mobility events. The descriptive analyses regarding dual-earner and dual-career couples are quite simple. We pooled the data originating from the above-mentioned three waves of ILFI and identified 2,000 couples aged 18–65 in 1983. By means of a two-way cross-tabulation of labour market positions of husbands and wives of these couples, we identified dual-earner couples within them. We then constructed an occupational 4 ILFI data originating from waves 1983 and 1990 and are available at the following website: <http://www.ilsa.cnr.it>. We did not use them because they are still in a raw form—that is, not yet ready to carry out rather complex multivariate analyses like those presented in this article. In accordance with our operational definition of dual-career couples, the three occupational classes are as follows: We followed this analytical strategy because, as mentioned in the introduction,⁶ the large majority of Italian husbands participate in the labour market irrespective of their level of schooling, whereas this is not the case for wives. In order to detect the mechanisms facilitating or impeding the formation of dual-earner and dual-career couples, we carried out two longitudinal analyses. As stressed in the first and second sections of this article, the relatively small number of dual-earner and dual-career couples in Italy mainly derives from the considerably large proportion of Italian wives with work experience who leave the labour market and enter full-time homemaking after marriage and particularly after the birth of a child. To understand the characteristics and the mechanisms of this phenomenon, we selected a sample of 1,000 women from ILFI interviewees, who were married during the twentieth century and who experienced at least one occupational episode in the period lasting from two years before the marriage to ten years after it. More precisely, we specified a piece-wise constant exponential model Blossfeld and Rohwer of the transition from the labour market to full-time homemaking by these wives, controlling for the effects of two sets of variables: The EHA model, therefore, controls for the following for the wives: This statement is based on a set of Kaplan-Meier estimates of the survival times in the labour market of Italian working wives whose occupations were classified according to the standard seven-tier schema of Erikson and Goldthorpe. For the sake of brevity, these analyses are not reported here. Dual-earner and dual-career couples in contemporary Italy months lasting from its beginning to birth of the child. All variables in the model—except birth cohort, age at first job, and experience of pre-marriage cohabitation—are, of course, time-variables. As mentioned earlier, the observation window of the EHA model starts two years before marriage in order to take into account the possibility that some couples may start negotiating and arranging their respective future economic and domestic roles before actually getting married, but in view of doing so. The observation window closes either when the wife experiences the transition to full-time homemaking or ten years after marriage. Two more comments are needed to better understand the logic underlying our EHA model. As mentioned, the analysis of the labour market behavior of married women sheds light on the variables affecting the formation and the persistence over time of dual-earner and dual-career couples, but it does not allow assessment of whether the individual careers of spouses influence each other reciprocally. In order to address this issue, we first selected a new sample once again from the ILFI data set made up of 1,000 couples, married during the twentieth century, whose marriage lasted at least fifteen years and in which the female spouses experienced at least one occupational episode of whatever length during that period. We then specified a cross-lag model in order to detect the

features of possible links between the occupational histories of the spouses. The reason we selected an observation window of fifteen, and not ten, years for this last analysis is linked to the characteristics of social mobility in Italy. Fifteen years seems to be a reasonable time-span to observe possible 7 We have specified an EHA model containing a variable expressing a period effect. In particular, we have individuated four periods α^1 , α^2 , α^3 , and α^4 linked to important changes in the legislation concerning maternity and parental leaves. The model we specified in order to detect the links potentially occurring between the respective occupational destination of the spouses is, like any other cross-lag model, a structural equations model, in which two variables vary over time and are allowed to influence each other. We recorded the score of both occupations at four points in time: By means of the cross-lag model, we attempted to measure a the strength of the relation between the occupational scores of each partner when they began their union and b the relation between the prestige score of the possible subsequent occupations performed by a spouse five, ten, and fifteen years after marriage and the prestige scores of both his or her previous occupation i . The inclusion in the model of a variable expressing the social origins of both spouses aims at testing our fourth hypothesis, which holds that in contemporary Italy, possibly even more than in most developed countries, homogamy does not only refer to educational level and occupational positions of individuals, but also to their respective social origins. A final technical remark about the cross-lag model refers to the measure of its goodness of fit.

Chapter 2 : Dual-earner and dual-career couples in contemporary Italy | Chiara Saraceno - calendrierdelas

In Working Wives and Dual-Earner Families, one-earner and dual-earner families are differentiated, with particular attention to the impact of wives' employment status (full-time or part-time) on household decision making. Among the most interesting research findings are: total family income or tax bracket and the cost of child care are among.