

Motivation for the study

Despite great scientific interest in the role of women's social and economic independence for marital stability **it is still unclear whether an improvement in women's socio-economic status has a destabilising impact on marital unions** at the time of changing gender roles and social shift from household production to household consumption.

Previous research

- Previous research usually found a negative association between women's employment and marital stability (for review see Spitze, 1988, Lyngstad & Jalovaara, 2010).
- However, this effect was also shown to weaken or even to disappear after accounting for gender ideology (Sayer, & Bianchi, 2000) or men's involvement in housework (Sigle-Rushton, 2010).
- **Many panel or retrospective datasets miss data on acknowledged gender ideology or women's orientation at work** → a need to control for these characteristics with the use of statistical methods that allow to account for unobserved heterogeneity.

Aim of the study

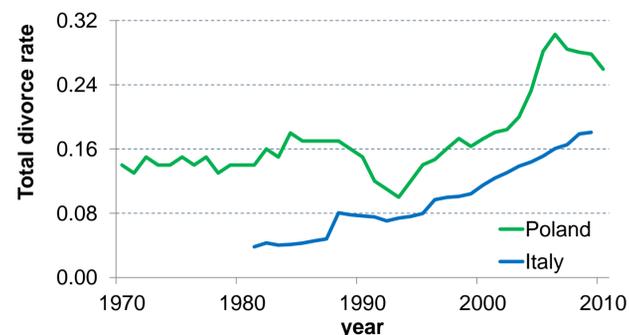
To contribute to the recent discussion on the **moderating role of the context for the impact of women's employment on marital stability**.

Countries context – Development in TDR

Italy and Poland share a **number of similarities**:

- strong **attachment to family**
- predominance of **Catholic values**
- **delayed diffusion of new family behaviours**.

Total Divorce Rate in Italy and Poland, 1970-2010

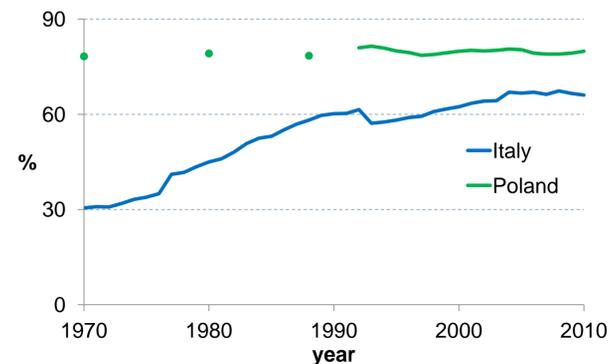


Countries context – Development in FLP

Italy and Poland display **key differences** with regard to:

- **women's labour force participation** (longer history of women's paid work participation in PL)
- **household living standards** (lower in PL than in IT)
- **gender roles** (higher acceptance of working women)

Women's labour force participation in Italy and Poland, 1970-2010



Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: the effect of women's employment on marital disruption is expected to be positive and significant both in Italy and Poland

Hypothesis 2: the destabilising effect of women's employment on marriage is expected to be stronger in Italy than in Poland because of shorter history and lower social acceptance of women's employment in the former country

Data

Data sources:

- Italian Multipurpose Household Survey on "Family and Social Subjects" 2009
- Polish Generations and Gender Survey 2010/2011

Advantages of the two datasets:

- they collect full employment histories of respondents
- they cover the most recent period when marital disruption was spreading rapidly in both societies

Analytical sample:

- Poland: 6352 women born 1955-1993, 4731 entered first marriage, 132 entered second marriage and 3 entered third marriage
- Italy: 10586 women born 1955-1994, 6709 entered first marriage, 141 entered second marriage and 2 entered third marriage.

Method

A **multiprocess hazard model** of marital disruption and employment processes which allows us to account for the common unobserved time-constant heterogeneity factors affecting the analysed processes and to estimate an effect of women's employment on marital disruption net of these characteristics.

Hazard of marital dissolution

$$\ln h_j^D(t) = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{DurMar}(t) + \alpha_2 \text{AgeCh}(t) + \alpha_3 X_j^D(t) + \alpha_4 X_j^D(t) + \alpha_5 \text{Emp}(t) + \varepsilon^D$$

Hazard of entry into employment

$$\ln h_j^{\text{EN}}(t) = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 \text{DurNonE}(t) + \gamma_2 \text{AgeCh}(t) + \gamma_3 X_j^{\text{EN}}(t) + \gamma_4 X_j^{\text{EN}}(t) + \gamma_5 \text{MarStat}(t) + \varepsilon^{\text{EN}}$$

Hazard of exit out of employment

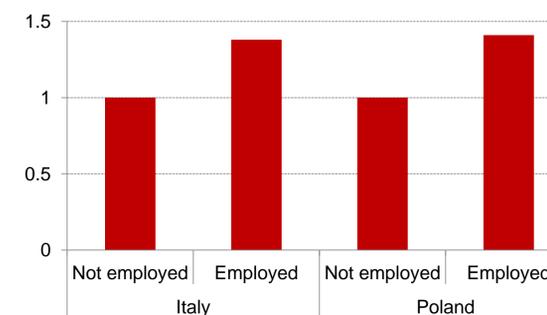
$$\ln h_j^{\text{EX}}(t) = \delta_0 + \delta_1 \text{DurE}(t) + \delta_2 \text{AgeCh}(t) + \delta_3 X_j^{\text{EX}}(t) + \delta_4 X_j^{\text{EX}}(t) + \delta_5 \text{MarStat}(t) + \varepsilon^{\text{EX}}$$

Heterogeneity components

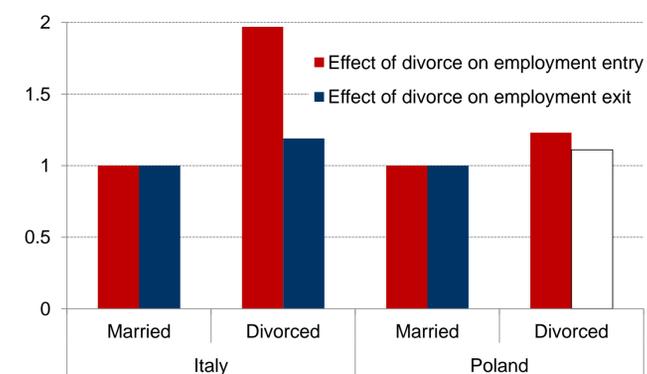
$$\begin{pmatrix} \varepsilon^D \\ \varepsilon^{\text{EN}} \\ \varepsilon^{\text{EX}} \end{pmatrix} \sim N \left(\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_{\varepsilon^D}^2 & \rho_{\varepsilon^D, \varepsilon^{\text{EN}}} & \rho_{\varepsilon^D, \varepsilon^{\text{EX}}} \\ \rho_{\varepsilon^{\text{EN}}, \varepsilon^D} & \sigma_{\varepsilon^{\text{EN}}}^2 & \rho_{\varepsilon^{\text{EN}}, \varepsilon^{\text{EX}}} \\ \rho_{\varepsilon^{\text{EX}}, \varepsilon^D} & \rho_{\varepsilon^{\text{EX}}, \varepsilon^{\text{EN}}} & \sigma_{\varepsilon^{\text{EX}}}^2 \end{pmatrix} \right)$$

Main Results

Impact of employment on divorce risk. Results from the joint model of divorce and employment processes (*relative risks*)



Impact of divorce on employment transitions. Results from the joint model of divorce and employment processes (*relative risks*)



Conclusions

- **We found support for Hypothesis 1:** The effect of women's employment on marital disruption is significantly positive in both countries, net of the unobserved time-constant characteristics of women (e.g., gender -role attitudes or work orientation a).
- **Contrary to our Hypothesis 2:** Women's employment has still strong destabilizing effect on marriages and this effect is equally strong in Italy as in Poland despite the fact that the history of women's employment and acceptance for women's employment in the former country is lower.
- **There is positive effect of divorce on the risk of employment entry.** This effect is much stronger in Italy than in Poland which we explain with the lower economic activity of married women in the former country.
- **Divorce does not facilitate leaving employment in Poland, while it does in Italy.** One possible explanation for Italy is that married women are often helping in family businesses which they need to leave in case of a divorce.

Outlook for future research

- **Future research should control for time-variant unobserved characteristics of women** to reveal causal effects of women's employment on divorce and vice versa (e.g., men's involvement household and care work, satisfaction with marriage).
- **Comparative studies on a large scale are needed** to better understand the role of the country context on the effects of women's employment on divorce and the effects of divorce on women's employment.

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Credits

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