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The banquet of Aeolus A familistic interpretation of Italy's lowest low fertility

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VOLUME 4 - ARTICLE 5

Date Received: 15 Nov 2000

Date Published: 8 May 2001

<http://www.demographic-research.org/volumes/vol4/5/>

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Abstract

During the last fifteen years in the Western countries, the higher is the proportion of people aged 20-30 living in the parental home, the lower is fertility. In this paper I suggest that the familistic structure of family and society can help in understanding both these demographic behaviours, looking at the Italian case. Nevertheless, these patterns could hold in the strong-family area as a whole, i.e. the Mediterranean Europe. The familism refers to some social norms managing the relationships among members and generations within the nuclear family and kinship. Direct and indirect connections between familistic norms and marital and reproductive behaviour are described, using data from several sources for Italy during the new demographic transition. Finally, I argue that the triumph of the familistic society could be a pyrrhic victory, because the native Italian population risks being unable to reproduce itself.

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Keywords

[familism](#), [fertility decline](#), [Italy](#), [late leaving the parental home](#), [strong family system](#)






Word count (Main text)

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