



MEDIA NARRATIVES OF THE ECONOMY AND FERTILITY



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Introduction

- **Media-conveyed narratives** on the state of the economy may affect **fertility decision-making, over and above** the role of objective economic constraints.
- In the fertility literature, we located only a few studies on the role of the media, but there is **no research for Europe using individual-level data** addressing the role of economic news.



Individual-level data
Female samples from
FSS 2009 & 2016

➤ 2007 - 2015



Media coverage data
Monthly economic news from
evening edition of TG1
Media Tenor



- *Methodology:* **Linear Probability Models** with **Fixed Effects**.

The effects of the media coverage of economy vs objective economic indicators

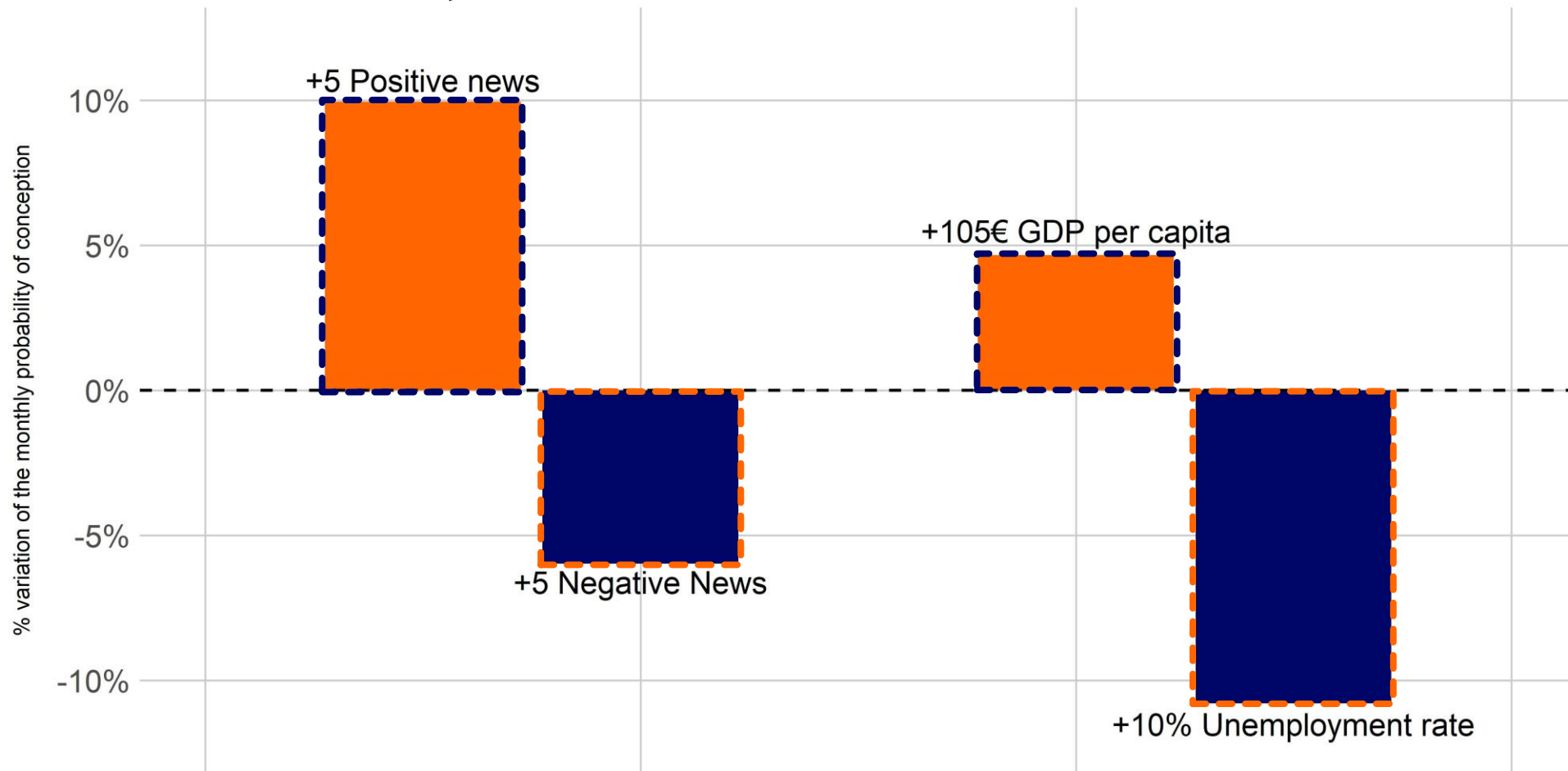


Fig. 1 Percentage variation of the monthly probability of conception, compared to the mean risk observed in the sample, due to changes in the media coverage of the economy and in the macroeconomic measures.

Conclusions

- Reporting **negative** news discourages fertility, while an increase in **positive** news has a positive (and larger) effect.
- These effects are **substantially relevant** and **close to those of the national economic conjuncture**.
- The effect of the “relative” coverage of economic news **changes** based on **the percentage of positive and negative news**.

This study offers – for the first time – evidence of the role of **economic news** in shaping **fertility behaviors**, controlling for **objective indicators** of micro- and macro-level economic conditions.