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**Title**

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**Abstract**

This study analyses the university choices of male and female students in Italy over the 2003–2012 period and for two sub-periods before (2003–2008) and after (2009–2012) the 2008 financial crisis. The analysis is guided by human capital, signalling and preference theories and implemented through a competing destinations model that controls for the socio-economic features of both the region of origin and destination. The findings show that in the post-crisis period, males became more career-oriented in their university choices due to increasingly constrained and competitive labour markets. The constrained post-crisis labour markets led females to focus more on the educational experience than on future employability prospects. Our results suggest that the financial crisis maintained or even widened gendered social roles as they relate to university choices; specifically, males assumed an even greater career-centred family role, whereas females adopted more adaptive lifestyles that potentially place them at a disadvantage in the labour market and in society in years to come. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Cattaneo, Mattia, E-Mail: mattia.cattaneo@unibg.it