

CHAPTER 4 - THE DEMOGRAPHIC REBUS

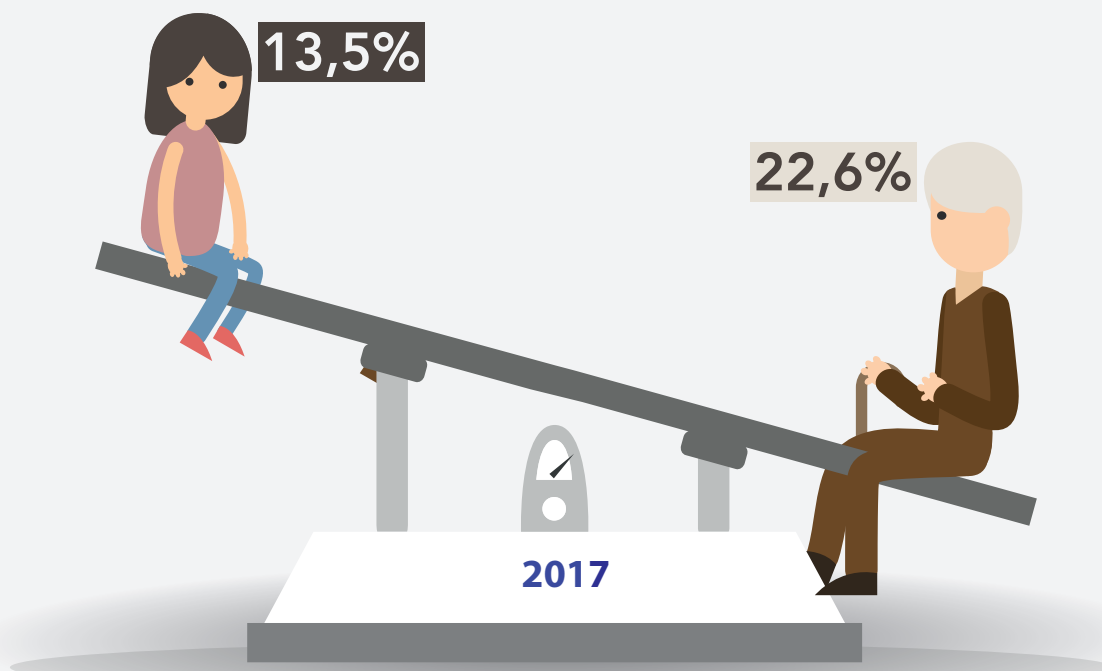
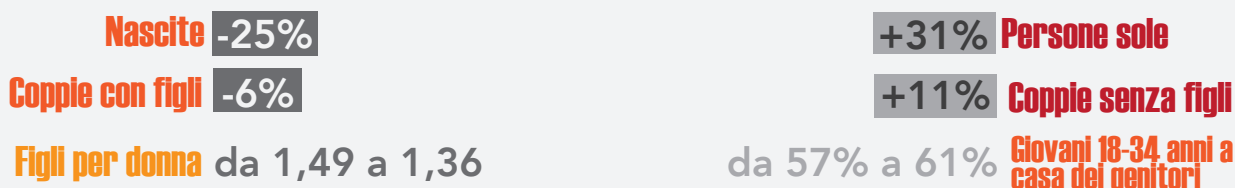
The profound demographic changes under way are giving rise to a great deal of interest, but also concern, in terms of their economic and social impact. Whilst, on the one hand, we are witnessing the natural change in certain individual and family behaviours, which simply reflect and adapt to the evolution of society, on the other hand, recent demographic shake-ups, such as the population decline, the birth crisis and the rapid ageing of the population, raise fears about the sustainability, including economic sustainability, of the demographic model towards which we are moving.

After three years of demographic decline, it is estimated that in 2018 the population in Veneto will grow again, in contrast to the national average trend. The recovery is due to migration, while the natural dynamics remain negative, due to the persisting birth crisis. As a result, the elderly proportion is growing and forecasts point to a further increase in population age over the next few decades.

The family structure tends to become thinner, fragmented and destructured, in some ways increasingly resembling the "Nordic" models, while still maintaining certain peculiarities.

Sostenibilità demografica: la partita è persa?

In Veneto negli ultimi 10 anni ...



After years of demographics being almost exclusively reserved for specialists in the field, today it is back in the headlines and is even included in bar talk. The concern over certain shocks recorded in demographic phenomena (population decline, ageing, low birth rates, to name but a few) fuels reflections ranging from the philosophical to the more pragmatic approach concerning public accounting. Statistics more subtly help to quantify the phenomena and to identify relations between them, which is what we propose to do in this chapter.

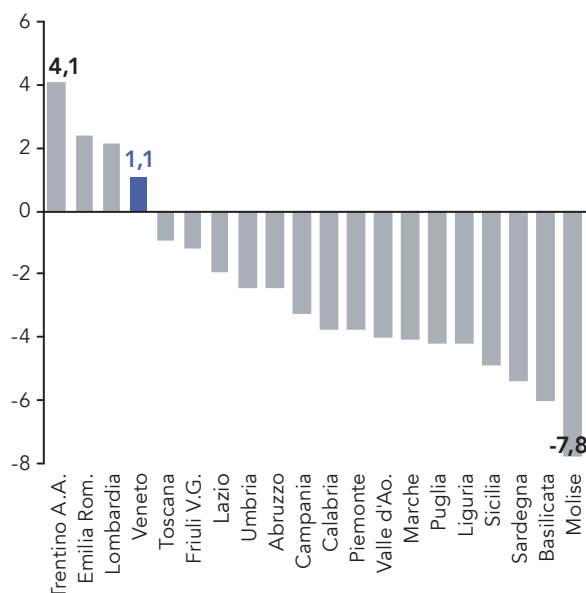
4.1 Population recovering in Veneto

The population in Italy, after a peak in 2014, continues to fall. In 2017 there were 60,483,973 people living in Italy, i.e. over 300,000 fewer than in 2014, and estimates for 2018 confirm this trend with a further drop of 90,000 people. Demographic decline is not uniform in all regions: Lombardy and Trentino Alto-Adige, for example, were not affected, while there were notable drops in Liguria, Molise and Basilicata. For Veneto, the population in 2018 was

estimated at 4.9104 million residents, over 5,000 more people than the previous year, equal to a rate of +1.1 people per thousand. After 3 years of demographic decline, with an overall loss of 22,559 people, there is a slight recovery in the population, against the national trend (-1.5 per thousand). This is a positive sign, as only four regions expect their population to increase.

Migration, especially international migration, is the main factor for population growth, offsetting the negative balance of natural dynamics, i.e. the balance between births and deaths. Since 2011, the natural dynamic in Veneto has been gradually becoming more negative, determined above all by a decrease in births, as well as an increase in deaths, as a result of the ageing population. In 2018, the contribution of the natural component remained strongly negative (-12,800 units), but unlike the years immediately preceding it was offset the incoming migratory flows, so as to increase the population. After the drop that occurred during the years of crisis, the migratory flows resumed. The migratory balance with foreign countries in 2018, up by 17,800 units, exceeded that of the previous year (13,900) and is the highest in the last 7 years. Interregional

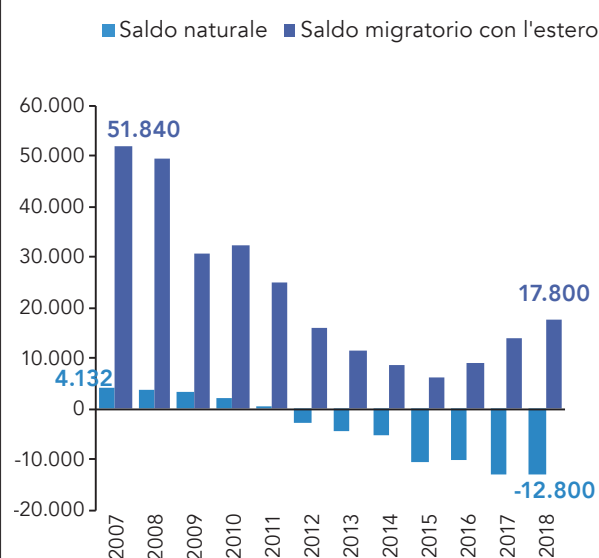
Fig. 4.1.1 - Variation rate of the population between 2017 and 2018(*) by region



(*) Estimated per thousand people.

Source: Processing of Istat data by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

Fig. 4.1.2 - Natural and migratory balance with foreign countries. Veneto - 2007: 2018 (*)



(*) Figures for 2018 are estimates.

Source: Processing of Istat data by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

mobility is also recovering and Veneto is more attractive for those coming from other regions: for domestic movements there was an estimated positive balance of 5,900 units, compared to 4,000 in the previous year.

The birth crisis persists

For the tenth consecutive year, births in Veneto decreased: in 2017, there were 36,596 births, a fall of 25% compared to 2008 and for the last year it is estimated that there were over 1,000 fewer births than in 2017. The phase of decline in the birth rate triggered by the crisis that began in 2008 seems, therefore, to have taken on a structural nature. There are several factors that determine this decline; one of these is structural, i.e. it concerns the reduction in the number of potential mothers.

In recent years, the reproductive life of women born in the baby-boom of the mid-60s has come to an end and reproduction relies on subsequent generations of women, who are fewer in numbers: in fact, in the past 10 years in Veneto women of childbearing

age have fallen in number by more than 104,000 units. This means

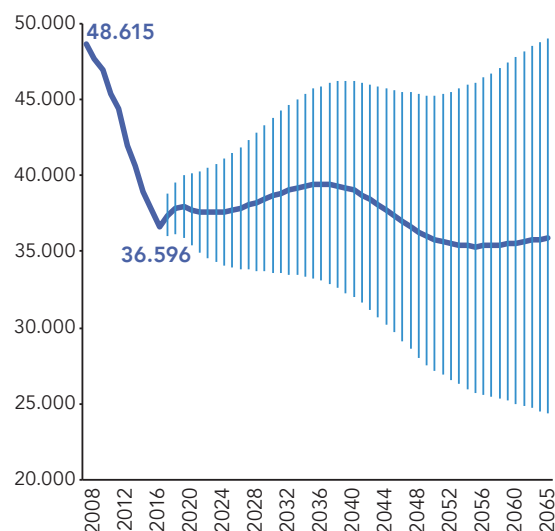
that even if women continued to have the same number of children per capita, total births would decrease. The most updated forecasts, however, unlike those previously, indicate a future period of temporary birth rate recovery, in correspondence with the emergence of the period of maximum fertility of women born during the slight growth trend of the 1990s and 2000s.

Another factor that affects the number of births is the decline in the average number of children that each woman brings into the world, i.e. the reproductive behaviour, in the most acute years of the economic crisis, the number of children per woman in Veneto fell from 1.49 in 2008 to 1.36 in 2018, a value higher than the national average (1.32) but still not prosperous. If the couples who postponed their procreative plans during the crisis don't catch up now, they risk losing any chance of achieving them. It is a critical problem that places Italy, together with the countries of Southern Europe, among the European countries with the lowest fertility rate. Currently in Europe, where, on average, 1.59 children are born per woman, there is a diversified situation in which France (1.9), Sweden (1.78) and Ireland (1.77) are the most prolific countries.

The delay in having children until older also contrib-

**Fewer women,
fewer children**

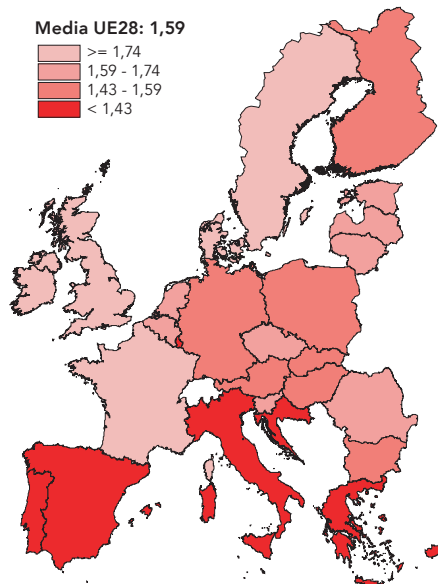
Fig. 4.1.3 - Births and birth forecasts(*): average situation and 90% confidence interval. Veneto - 2008: 2065



(*) Forecasts start in 2018.

Source: Processing of Istat data by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

Fig. 4.1.4 - Total fertility rate: average number of children per woman. EU28 - 2017



Source: Processing of data from Eurostat by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

utes to the reduction in fertility rate: today in Veneto, as in Italy, women give birth at an average of 32 years of age, one year older than in 2008. This shift



Children are born increasingly late in life

in starting a family to an older age means that women are more likely

to remain childless or not manage to have the desired number of children (on average more than 2). However, a child is a long-term commitment, which is desired in a context of security and adequate care; due to the job insecurity and the economic crisis that amplified uncertainty about the future and the difficulties of securing an adequate salary, young people are slow to leave home and postpone decisions concerning a possible family, so the first child is no longer born at around 23 years on average, as in the 1970s, but between 28 and 32 years old. There is also an important aspect that concerns the concrete possibility for mothers and fathers to be able to balance work and family, due to inflexible working hours and poor services.

In particular, mothers are particularly disadvantaged from an occupational point of view, since they are more likely to lose their jobs (77% of resignations of workers with children are women), and the burden of domestic duties and family care is still largely on



Work/life balance, still a problem especially for mothers

their shoulders: if a father devotes an average of 2 hours a day to family duties, a

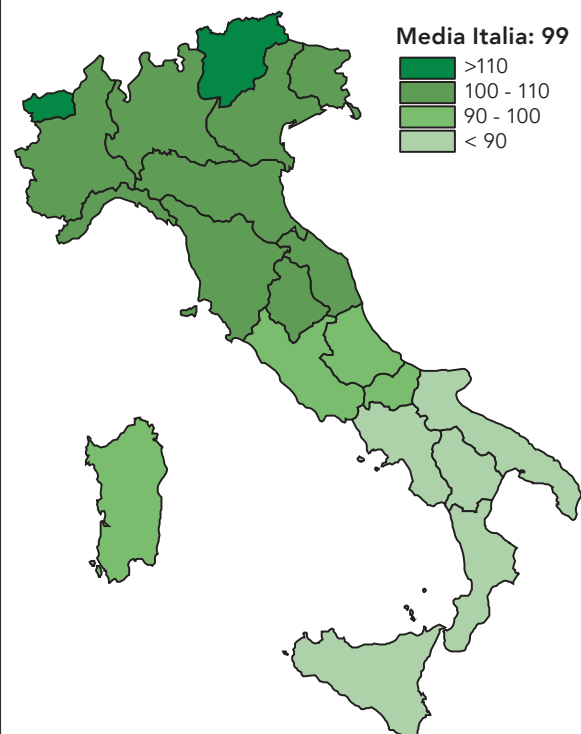
mother devotes about 5. Family duties, despite being without pay and of sentimental nature, are still work and the imbalance in load of these activities that is carried by women has the effect of lengthening the working day and thus it affects job and/or pregnancy decisions. The Mother's Index seeks to summarise the situation for mothers in the areas of care, work and services, in order to measure the "quality of life for mothers". In 2004, the first year of observation, the value of this indicator was 100 for Italy and 105.2 for Veneto, values on the basis of which improvements in the socio-economic situation of mothers can be detected in the event of increases over time, or worsening if the values are significantly lower. In 2017, the index was substantially stable, standing at 99 for Italy and 104.5 for Veneto, placing our region in an intermediate position in the regional ranking, with Trentino Alto-Adige at the top.

In terms of care, the indicator summarises a situa-

tion based on the maternity choices made by women (fertility rate) and the imbalance of domestic activities between employed parents, for whom the work-life balance is more complicated. For Veneto, this indicator shows 112.7, in sixth place, where the average is 109.8, a result that is improving (it was 108.6 in 2004), which is not so much due to fertility but to more equal behaviour in the management of family duties, which mainly features in couples with women born in the 80s, or graduates, or with children of pre-school age.

Veneto is still sixth in terms of job opportunities offered to mothers, as can be seen from the employment rates and poor participation in employment of women at different ages in their lives: the index for employment is 110.6 with a national average of 96.8. For Veneto, this demonstrates substantial stability compared to the vast majority of regions, which have experienced a decline due to the crisis that made it much more difficult from 2008 onwards to find and hold down a job while having a family.

Fig. 4.1.5 - Mother's Index by region. Italy - 2017



Source: Processing of data from Save the Children by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

For the third area, that of childcare, which is often one of the problems most frequently lamented by working parents, we refer mainly to the efficiency of providing care in nurseries and supplementary services. In this area, the Veneto region is already at a slight disadvantage with a value of 98.5 in 2004, falling in 2017 to 92.6. This decline is in line with trends at national level (92.4), due to the lack of available and economically sustainable places in nurseries and services for early childhood, which puts the region in 13th position. In Veneto, the number of places available covers a maximum of 21.2% of potential users. There is still a gap in relation to the objectives set by the EU, which stipulate that early childhood services must cover at least 33% of potential demand, and the share of expenditure borne by families to contribute to the cost of the service is considerable: 26.2% of total expenditure (19.4% nationally).

Overall, therefore, many of the obstacles to having children are of a socio-economic nature. If people are to be able to fulfil their desire for children, public policy actions are needed to support all the processes involved: measures to make it easier for young people to start a family, tools to balance work and private life, maternity leave, services for children and the elderly, cultural action to promote equal responsibilities in family work, differentiated taxation for families. Germany, which acted in this way during the crisis years, saw the fertility rate rise from 1.36 to 1.57 children per woman and an increase in births of almost 15%.

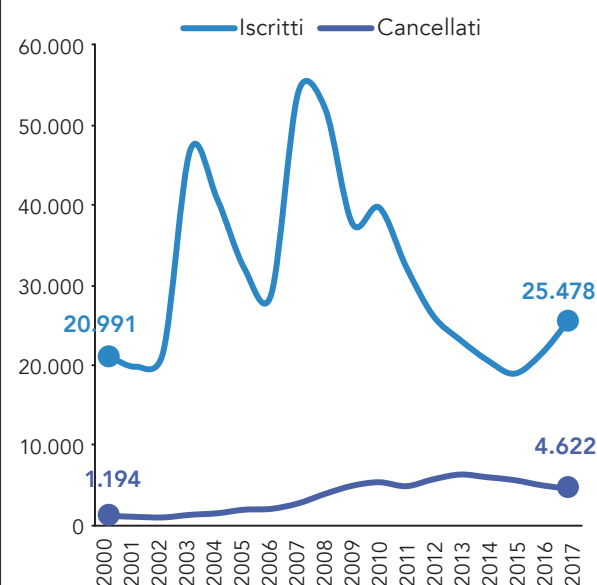
Veneto attracts new residents

We have seen how migratory flows have offset the loss of population in recent years. However, these flows have fluctuating trends over the long term that follow the national dynamics. After the period of crisis that began in 2008, which saw a reduction in the number of people settling in our region, today Veneto seems to have regained attractiveness. The inflow has increased both from abroad and from other Italian regions. The inflows from abroad concern almost exclusively foreigners (in the last year, there were 25,478 against 2,630 Italians¹); these flows have recovered in the last 2 years after the decline that followed the boom of entries in 2007 (54,145 people, in part due to the extension of the European Union to Romania and immigrant legalisation

of the previous year). The most attractive province for foreigners is Treviso (5,577 new arrivals in 2017), followed by Venice (4,873) and Verona (4,754).

Those who move to Veneto from other Italian regions, on the other hand, are mainly Italian: 17,915 against 6,454 foreigners in 2017. After a post-crisis decline that began in 2008, these arrivals also marked a recovery from 2013.

Fig. 4.1. - Registration and removal from registries of foreign nationals from and to other countries. Veneto - 2000:2017



Source: Processing of Istat data by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

¹ The most recent available data for residence transfers according to nationality is 2017.



The outflow are also consistent

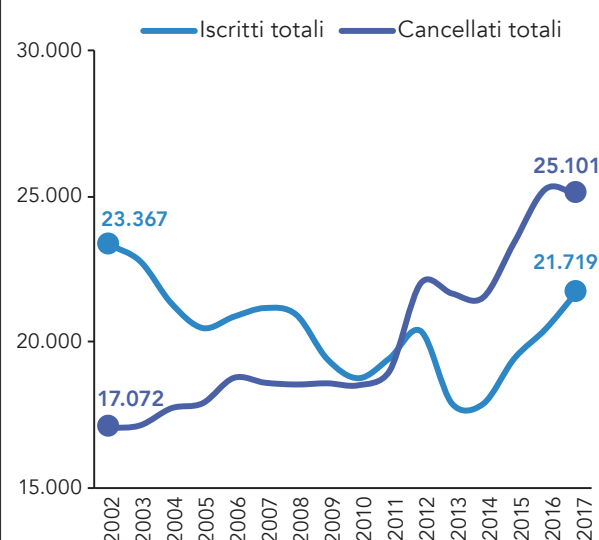
The crisis has also affected exit flows from Veneto, which stood

at 34,738 in 2017 and, although down on 2016, were 34% more than 10 years earlier. Among those who go abroad, the share of Italians has gradually increased over the years, now representing almost 70% of the total (10,709 people), however, it should be noted that part of these may be naturalised Italians who emigrate to a third country or return to their country of origin, after spending a period in Italy and having acquired Italian citizenship, given the sharp increase in acquisitions of citizenship since 2013². The preferred destination countries of Italians are the United Kingdom (23%), France (13%) and Germany (12%); foreigners mainly go to Romania (25%).

Even those who move to other regions are mainly Italian (74.2%, 14,392 people), a characteristic that in recent years has remained almost constant; the most popular destination regions are Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, Friuli Venezia-Giulia and Trentino Alto-Adige.

² Istat estimates that, in 2017, 28,6% of Italian emigrants living abroad will be of foreign origin.

Fig. 4.1.7 - Registration and removal from registries of Italian citizens. Veneto - 2002:2017



Source: Processing of Istat data fby the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

Fig. 4.1.8 - Foreign and national destinations preferred by those leaving the region. Veneto - 2017



Source: Processing of Istat data fby the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

Figures of Italian emigration from Veneto to other countries

In the last 10 years, 72,910 Italian citizens have moved their residence from Veneto to other countries, compared to only 27,865 doing the opposite. The outflow to foreign countries is one that has continued to grow in recent years, but which has seen a real surge since 2012, in line with the national trend. It seems clear that the effective balance between entries and exits has deteriorated since the 2008 crisis. Expatriates are almost equal for men (55%) and women, with an average age of around 31 years. Almost half of them are between the ages of 25 and 39 and just under a quarter are between the ages of 40 and 64, a considerable proportion. An interesting aspect is Italians who leave the Veneto region to move to other regions. On average, these people are older and the average age is over 36. Compared to those who go abroad, in fact, the age group relating to the upper end of the working age (40-64 years old, 28.8%) is slightly larger and the 25-39 group is slightly smaller (45%).

If we look at the mobility of Italian graduates, the indicator that takes into account entries and exits for Veneto in 2016 was -4.6 per thousand; this means that given a contingent of one thousand resident graduates, the total annual balance is -5. This figure has worsened slightly, in line with the Italian average.

Society living longer, but demographic balance is at risk

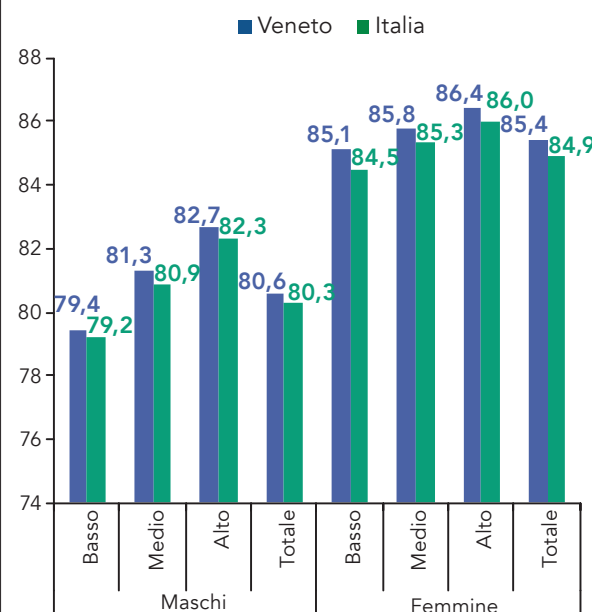
Life expectancy continues to grow: in Veneto it was 83.4 years in 2017 (81.3 for men and 85.6 for women), while the Italian average was 82.7 years. The region is therefore confirmed among those with more favourable living conditions, second after Trentino Alto-Adige (83.8 years). However, these favourable conditions are not equally distributed among the population.

As underlined by the National Observatory on Health in the Italian Regions³: "the main factors of inequality

are related to context and individuals. The first refer to aspects of the system, such as the resources available to the National Health Service (SSN), its

organisation and effectiveness; other factors can be found in the context of life, for example the level of deprivation, the degree of urbanisation and the social capital of the territory of residence. The individual factors are both of a biological nature, such as gender, age and genetic heritage, and of a socio-economic nature, the latter linked to education, professional status and level of income." There is in fact a relationship between the level of education and the state of health, i.e. the lower the level of education, the more people are exposed to risks, diseases (especially chronic diseases) and death. As the level of education is closely correlated with the socio-economic status of the person, this report confirms the extent to which social inequalities in health are significant. For example, in Veneto, men with a low level of education can hope to live to 79.4 years, the most educated to 82.7 years; among women the gap is smaller but still significant, the least educated reach on average 85.1 years and the most educated up to 86.4

Fig. 4.1.9 - Life expectancy at birth of the population by level of education and gender. Veneto and Italy - 2012-2014



Source: Processing of Istat data by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office



Strong disparities in health...

³ Institute of Public Health - Hygiene Department of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, National Observatory on Health in the Italian Regions, Rome, 2018.

Health inequalities are of particular concern when they are closely linked to socio-economic conditions, because economic and cultural factors determine lifestyles and therefore there is the risk that chronic illnesses are passed on to younger generations. One example is excess weight, a major health risk factor, which affects 31% of people in the "upper" socio-economic classes and a significant 52% of those in the "lower" socio-economic group.⁴

In addition to health inequalities, there are also inequalities in access to public health services. Despite the fact that our National Health Service is considered among the most universalist



...and access to the public health service

services, in that it guarantees free and equal treatment for everyone, according to a Eurostat survey, Italy is one of the countries with the highest percentage of unmet health needs because treatments are considered too costly. In Veneto, over 240,000 people went without medical treatment in 2016, even though they needed it, because they could not bear the costs. Deprivation affects 5.8% of the population of 16 years and over (8.6% in Italy), mainly for dental treatment (5.5%), but also for specialist visits (2.5%). The difficulty of accessing care is greater for those at risk of poverty or social exclusion, highlighting a dramatic injustice. 15% of people in a condition of poverty or social exclusion go without treatment for economic reasons, compared to 4% of those who have better economic resources.

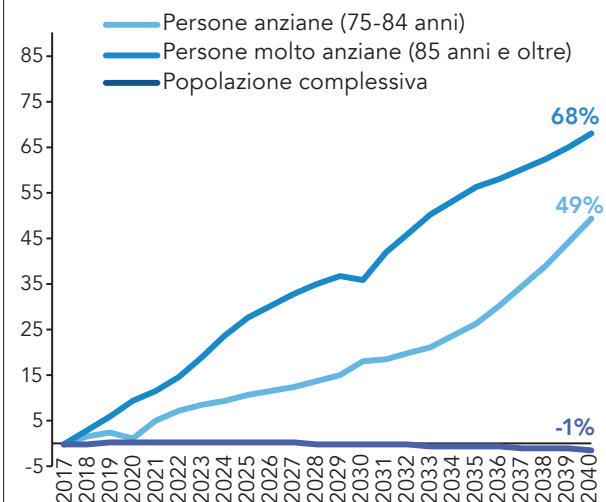
One of the effects of the increase in life expectancy, in a context of low birth rates, is the overall ageing of the population, which has continued over



There are 2,000 more 80 year-olds than births

the years in both absolute and relative terms. In 2017 in Veneto, 615,558 people were over 74 years of age, an increase of 23% compared to 2008. They represent 12.5% of the population and the forecasts for the near future do not show any signs of slowing, so much so that, by 2040, the proportion of the older component could reach 18%. In 20 years time, the expected variation for 75-84 year olds is 49% and rises as far as 68% for the very old (85 years and over), compared to a population that is substantially stable overall.

Fig. 4.1.10 - Growth forecasts for the elderly population(*). Veneto - 2017:2040



(*) % variation on 2008. Forecasts from 2018.

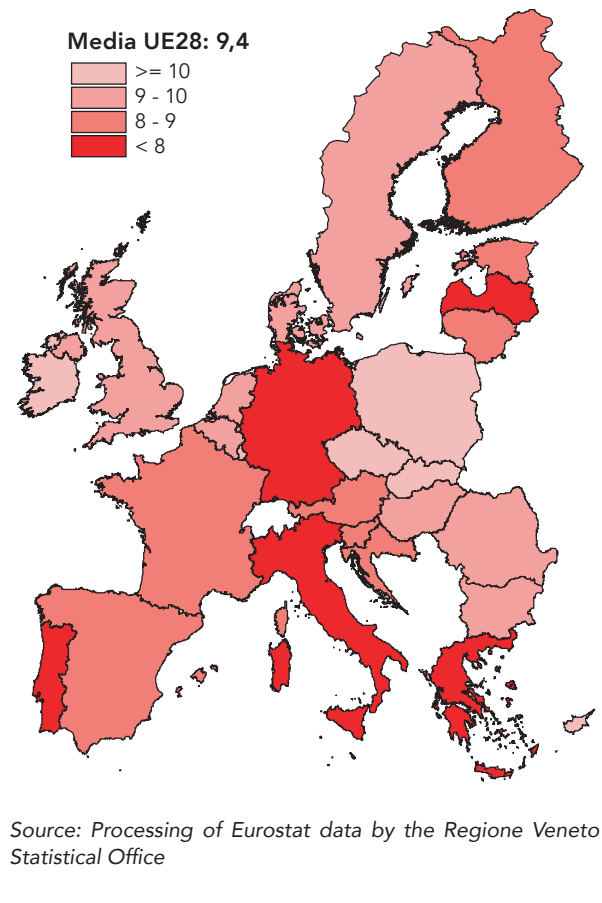
Source: Processing of Istat data fby the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

In the European panorama, Italy stands out for the highest ratio of the elderly population and, together with France, holds the record for the highest number of people over 100 years of age; the generational imbalance has become so great that, for the first time, the number of births has fallen below that of people in their eighties. In Veneto, there are 38,681 80 year-olds, over 2,000 more than the number of births, and there are 1,196 people over 100!

However, more attention must be paid to generational imbalances than to individual population contingents: the low birth rate reduces the younger generations while the elderly population grows larger. The result is a demographic decline that leads to serious problems in social and economic sustainability. It is therefore the relationship between these two trends that needs to be reversed, investing in the quality of life for young people and aiming to restructure their future.

⁴ Region of Veneto, "Steps in Veneto. Analysis of data through historical series 2008-2016", https://www.epicentro.iss.it/passi/pdf2017/Serie_2008_2016.pdf.

Fig. 4.1.1 - Percentage of over-75s in the population. EU28 - 2017



4.2 Changing Families

The image we have of the family today is very different from that experienced by our parents or grandparents. Over the last fifty years, the family has undergone a process of profound transformation that has changed its structure, the relationships between its members, its values and the ways in which it is formed.

Until the 1960s, Italy was dominated by a family model typically composed of a working husband, a housewife and at least two children. The family was created and based on marriage, mainly religious and considered indissoluble in Mediterranean countries with a strong Catholic imprint like ours. There was a clear division of roles, which saw the male figure as the head of the family, who financially supported the whole family (*male breadwinner*), dominating socially, but also legally, over his wife and children. The

woman of the house was responsible for domestic work and both the wife and children were subject to the authority of the husband/father. Discrimination against children born out of wedlock (natural children), who were treated worse than legitimate children, was also legally accepted.

In the 1970s, many things began to change. The progressive increase in numbers of children attending school and in employment and professional opportunities during the economic boom allowed women to enter the world of work, finding their own fulfillment and autonomy, including financially, outside the home. The large-scale entry of women into the labour market helped to change family roles and relations between the sexes and generations.

The extent of the changes was so great that they also had legal consequences. Many of the laws concerning families date back to the 1970s: in 1970, for example, the law on divorce established that marriage in Italy was no longer indissoluble, while in 1975 the Family Law reform came into force, with which husband and wife were given equal rights for the first time in terms of family decisions, succession, property, parental authority over children and natural children were granted the same protection as legitimate children.

These are followed by a series of other changes, still ongoing, which are gradually redefining the concept of family, making it more and more like the "Nordic" models, while maintaining certain peculiarities.



Towards the Nordic model?

In recent years, in fact, Italy has also witnessed the consolidation

of phenomena that Northern European countries have been experiencing for some time, such as a decrease in marriages and increase in divorces and de facto couples, the diffusion of reconstituted families, i.e. families formed by persons who have previously been married, and the progressive dissociation between parenting and marriage. However, there are still some typical aspects of our family system, such as low fertility, the progressive postponement of parenthood, the delay in children leaving their family home to live on their own or the persistence of strong gender differences in the division of domestic and care work, which still weighs heavily on women.

These are really important changes, some of which have significant legal, as well as socio-economic, implications. Think, for example, of the legal recognition of civil unions, which took place in Italy with a

law in 2016⁵. This institution, which affects the civil status of the individual, legally recognises same-sex couples and grants same-sex couples many of the rights and duties that come with marriage.

In Italy, since the law came into force in 2017, a total of 6,712 civil unions have been formed. In Veneto there are 502 civil unions, 7.5% of the national total, mainly male couples (69%).

However, while the ways and times of family life are changing, moving away from the usual canons of the traditional family, it does not signal a crisis for the family in terms of emotional relations and the main support network; on the contrary, the role of the family is increasingly central, in part to compensate for the shortcomings of the public welfare system.

From plural to singular

Families are increasing, but the family structure tends to narrow, becoming more fragmented and deconstructed than ever before.

In Veneto, there were 2,076,323 resident families in 2017, around 80% more than in 1971 (+6.4% since 2007), but they are decidedly smaller: in almost 50 years, the average household size has fallen from 3.6 to just over two.

In particular, the number of single-person households, which made up 10% of households in 1971,

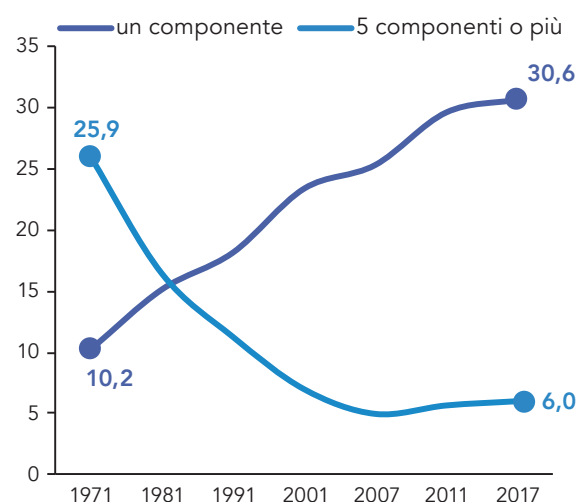
today account for almost 31%, and the number of households with

five or more members has decreased (from 26% to 6%).

This is the consequence of a series of socio-demographic processes that have affected our country in recent decades. First of all, the persistent low fertility and the birth crisis, which we discussed extensively in the first part of the chapter, the progressive ageing of the population and marital instability.

In addition, families with several generations living together (grandparents, parents and children), once quite common in Italy, especially in Veneto, where the agricultural and residential structure supported larger families than those of other regions, including in the south, have almost disappeared. Today, despite the fact that the increase in life expectancy contributes to an increase in the number of gener-

Fig. 4.2.1 - Percentage of single-person households and households with five or more components. Veneto - 1971: 2017



Source: Processing of Istat data by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

ations alive at the same time, it is rare to find several generations within the same household. Married children choose not to live at home with their parents, just as the elderly, if healthy and self-sufficient, prefer to stay in their own home, even when they are alone.

In 2017, there were more than 620,000 people living alone, an increase of 31% in the last 10 years (almost 150,000 more).

187,000 elderly people over 74 live alone

For the most part, these are elderly people, especially over 74, who alone account for 30% of all single-person households. There are about 187,000 over 74 year-olds living alone, +39% compared to 2007, and the majority of them are women (82%).

In the last decade, the proportion of single-person households in the middle age group, between 45 and 64 years of age, mostly people who have just separated or divorced, has also increased.

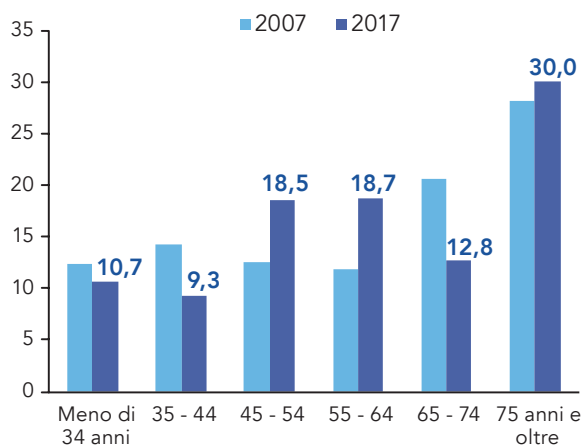
Conversely, households with people under 34 years of age and young adults aged 35-44 living alone

Young single families are falling in number

have decreased, now accounting for about 20% of all one-person households, compared to almost 27% ten years

⁵ Law no. 76 of 20 May 2016, known as the "Cirinna Law".

Fig. 4.2.2 - Percentage of single-person families by age range out of the total of single-person households. Veneto - 2007 and 2017



Source: Processing of Istat data by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

ago. This is due to the progressive increase in the length of time that young people remain in the family home, as well as to the Italian tendency for young people to leave the family mainly to go and live in couples, rather than alone.

Many different families

Although declining, couples with children are still the most common family structure (717,000 in 2017 in Veneto), followed by single persons (624,000), couples without children (498,000) and finally single parents (202,000).

Whilst, on the one hand, there has been a decrease in the number of couples with children (-6.4% compared to 2007),



Couples with children falling in number...

on the other hand, the families that decide

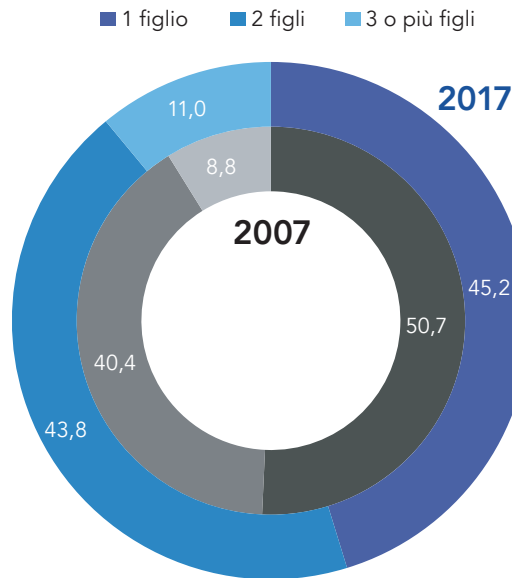
to have children opt to have at least two. In Veneto, the number of couples with one child has fallen, more significantly than the national average, in favour of couples with two or more children. In 2017, couples from Veneto with only one child represented 45% of all couples with children, whilst they ac-

Table 4.2.1 - Main types of family. Veneto - 2017 and 2017/2007 % var.

	In thousands	2017/2007 % var.
Couples	1,214	0.0
married	1,092	-4.0
unmarried	122	59.6
with children	717	-6.4
without children	498	10.8
unmarried with children	69	229.3
unmarried without children	53	-4.2
reconstituted	103	29.6
reconstituted and married	60	21.7
reconstituted with children	61	86.2
Single people	624	30.9
Single parents	202	14.7

Source: Processing of Istat data by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

Fig. 4.2.3 - Percentage distribution of the number of children per couple. Veneto - 2007 and 2017



Source: Processing of Istat data by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

counted for more than 50% in 2007, while couples with two or more children reached almost 55% (49% in 2007).

Therefore, if it is true that people are having children increasingly later (32 and 36 years the average age of the mother and father respectively when the child is born in 2017) and there is an increase in childless couples (+10.8%), it is also true that couples who want them and are able to tend not to stop at just one child.

... but those who do decide to have them do not stop at just one!

Alternative couples

In Veneto as in Italy, the number of marriages is decreasing: whereas, at the beginning of the 1980s, almost 24,000 marriages were celebrated in one year, about 5.4 per 1,000 people, in 2017 it fell to 14,270, just 2.9 per 1,000 people.

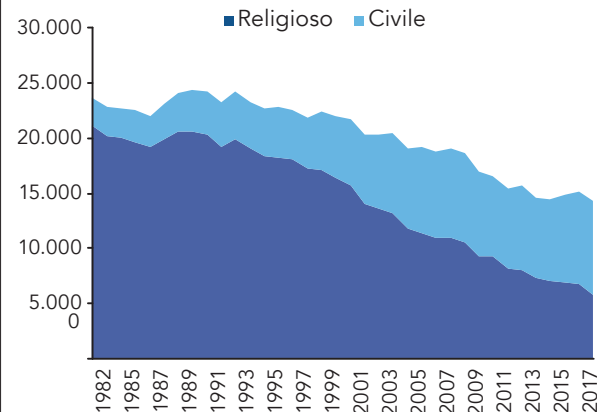
Not only are there fewer marriages, but people also marry later in life: the average age at first marriage has gone from

People marry less and later in life

26.9 years in 1982 to 36.8 years in 2017 for men and from 23.9 to 33.8 years for women, an increase of almost ten years!

Even when people choose to get married, they opt increasingly for a civil ceremony. In Veneto, civil marriages have surpassed religious marriages and today account for almost 60% of all marriages, more than the national average (49.5%). Just think that in the early 1980s it was only 11%! The trend is constantly growing and numbers rose sharply in the last year (almost 4 percentage points more than in 2016). This change in custom, particularly significant in a

Fig. 4.2.4 - Marriages celebrated in church. Veneto - 1982:2017



Source: Processing of Istat data by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

traditionally Catholic country like Italy, is partly due to the growing situations of conjugal instability, which prevent divorced people from having their second wedding in church, and partly to the increase in the number of marriages with at least one foreign spouse. In 2017, second marriages represent 25% of all marriages (in 1982 just 3.7%), while marriages with at least one foreign spouse reached 21% of the total (5.2% in 1995).

However, the preference for civil ceremonies increasingly concerns first marriages as well (48% in 2017, 9% in the early 1980s), highlighting the progressive spread of more secularised behaviour in our region as well.



The decision to live together

As a result, the number of unmarried people living together

has increased, a phenomenon that is now so common that it no longer carries the social stigma it did a few decades ago. While in Italy it is still a relatively recent option and less widespread than in other countries, especially in Northern Europe, there is a rapid increase in unmarried couples.

In Veneto, unmarried couples now make up 10% of couples (9.4% in Italy), when 10 years ago it was 6% and 20 years earlier it was not even 2%.

The birth of children outside of or before marriage is now a common occurrence, no longer creating



Births outside of marriage are increasingly common

a stir or scandal and marking the end of the traditional association

between marriage and parenthood. While in 2007, only a minority of unmarried couples in Veneto had children (27%), in just ten years the situation has been turned on its head, with as many as 56% of unmarried couples having children.

Marriage, however, has not gone out of fashion, nor have informal unions definitively replaced it. Even in countries such as Sweden, where the phenomenon of cohabitation has been consolidated for a long time, the majority of those who live together tend to formalise their union sooner or later through marital ties, wanting to confirm, for themselves and for others, the solidity of the family relationship and the reciprocal commitments undertaken. However, increasingly, we get to the altar after the arrival of the first child!

New families grow

As a result of growing marital instability, new family structures are emerging, such as reconstituted couples and single parent families.

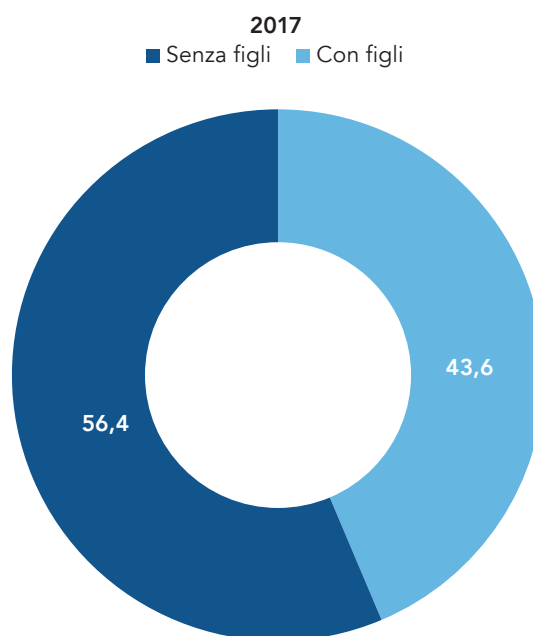
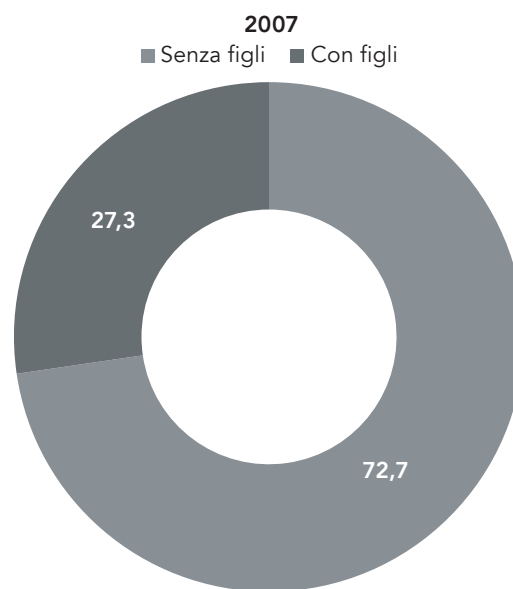
Hereinafter, reconstituted couples are defined as cohabiting couples, including those unmarried, with or without children, where at least one of the two partners comes from a previous marriage, broken off by separation, divorce or the death of the spouse.

In 2017, there were about 103,000 reconstituted couples in Veneto and these represent 8.5% of all couples, while in 2007 it was 6.5%. In 60% of cases, the new couple remarried, while in 40% of cases



Reconstituted couples

Fig. 4.2.5 - Unmarried couples with and without children (percentage distribution). Veneto - 2007 and 2017



Source: Processing of Istat data by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

they live together without marrying.

The majority have children (60%), so there are also increasing numbers of children and young people who experience an "extended" family.

Single-parent families, although defined as "new" family structures, have always existed; what has changed is why

Single parent families

they exist. In the past, they were usually the result of the early death of one of the two spouses, or as a result of the emigration of men, forced to leave the family to go to work elsewhere, or were formed by young unmarried women who were abandoned after the birth of their child. They were often the result of unavoidable and unwanted events, sometimes due to shame and social marginalization. Today, however, they derive mainly from the voluntary choices of individuals and are socially accepted.

There are 202,000 single parents in Veneto, 15% more than ten years ago. In more than eight cases out of ten, it is a mother living with her children. There are more single-parent mothers than fathers, both because the average life of women is longer and because custody for children is more frequently granted to mothers in separations and divorces.

This family structure can involve different circumstances: unmarried mothers or, divorced or separated young people who live with their children; older people, more often widowed but also divorced, who live with adult children who have never married. A good proportion of single parents with children are over 64 (33%), 48% are under 54 and 36% have children under 18 years of age. In 48% of cases, they have come from a previous marriage, if not already

legally separated, they are in fact; the number of those who have never married is marginal.

Although the proportion of single parent families is not very high, they are observed with particular interest and concern, because they are particularly fragile families, more exposed than others to the risk of high economic vulnerability and of slipping into situations of poverty or social exclusion, especially if young. Especially in Italy their fragility derives from the disadvantaged position of women in the labour market, even more so when they are or become mothers. They are often left alone to shoulder the responsibilities of care towards their children and are not sufficiently supported by the public social policy system, which implements poor and ineffective measures.

Putting off the calendar of life

In Italy, more than in other European countries, there is a general tendency to postpone the main stages of the family journey, such as marriage and the arrival of children, but even simply moving out of the family home. As a result, most young people continue to live with their parents for a long time.

In 2017, more than 6 out of every 10 18-34 year-olds in Italy were still living at home with their parents, the highest figure in Europe after Croatia, Slova-

In Italy, young people stay at home with their parents until they are over 30.

kia and Greece, countries characterised by high unemployment rates, compared

to an average of 50% across the EU and much lower percentages in northern countries. In Finland and Denmark, for example, it is only about 20% and

Table 4.2.2 - Single parents according to certain characteristics. Veneto and Italy - 2007 : 2017

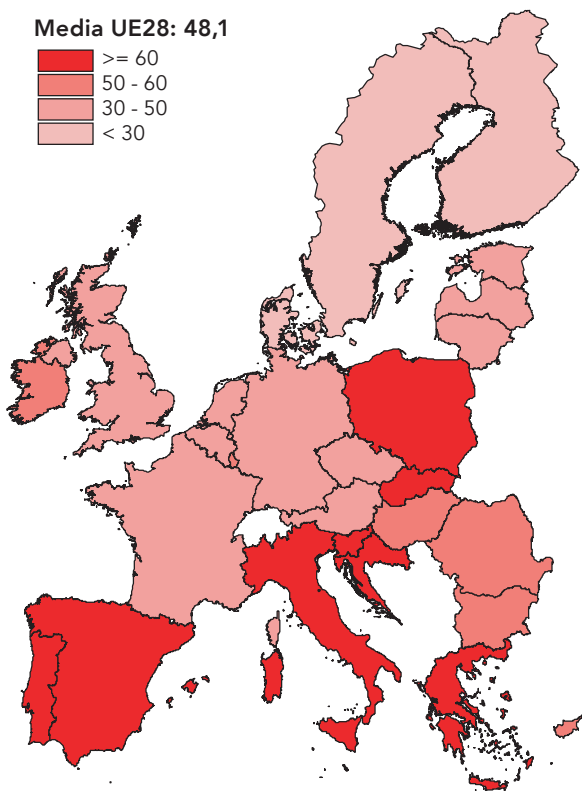
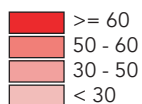
	2007		2017	
	Veneto	Italy	Veneto	Italy
Women	82.2	84.6	87.5	82.6
Up to 54 years	42.1	47.3	47.8	52.4
65 years and over	40.2	34.1	33.1	30.0
Separated or divorced	n.s.	38.0	47.8	50.8
Widow/er	58.3	50.8	41.4	35.0
Without dependent children	68.2	66.9	64.1	63.2
With at least 1 dependent child	n.s.	33.1	35.9	36.8

n.s. = Estimation not significant due to low numbers

Source: Processing of Istat data by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

Fig. 4.2.6 - Percentage of 18-34 year-olds living at home with their parents. EU28 - 2017

Media UE28: 48,1



Source: Processing of data from Eurostat by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

in Sweden about 25%. In these countries, people leave home at an average age of 21, whilst in Italy they wait until they are at least 30.

There is certainly a cultural aspect behind this. In the Mediterranean countries, and even more so in Italy, the bond between parents and children is particularly strong and remains close for a long time. The family invests heavily in their children, both emotionally and materially, and is particularly protective and willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of them, having them in their homes for a long time, until the best opportunities for their future come around.

In addition, there is the difficult economic situation that has affected the country in recent years



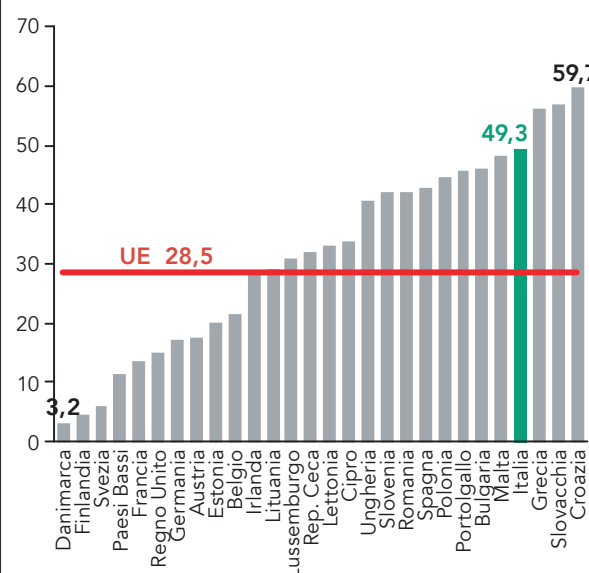
The crisis hinders young people's desire for independence

and a welfare system that is not very generous towards

young people and families in general. The lack of adequate public aid and of sufficient social shock absorbers, as well as the problematic condition of the labour market, particularly serious for the young generations, certainly does not encourage Italian children to leave home. Without the help of their parents, it can be very difficult for young people to achieve autonomy, given the high cost of housing and rents and the difficulty of finding a job, which is often precarious and on low wages. For this reason, more than elsewhere in Europe, young people in Italy only leave home when they have reasonable economic security to rely on, and mainly to live with their partners and not alone. Things are different in Northern Europe, in particular in the Scandinavian countries, where many children live alone and leave home while they are still students to attend university, managing to support themselves thanks to benefits and public grants towards education.

It is not only 20-year-olds who stay with their parents, but also older children, who have finished their studies and in many cases are already working. In Italy almost half of 25-34 year-olds still live with their families (49,3%), compared to only 3% of their Dan-

Fig. 4.2.7 - Percentage of young adults aged 25-34 living at home with their parents. EU28 - 2017



Source: Processing of data from Eurostat by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office

ish peers.

Unfortunately, the right conditions for starting a family in Italy are achieved later and later, and with greater difficulty, and often not even work can guarantee young people the security they need to start a family.

The situation in Veneto is not very different from the national average: in 2017 there were 504,000 young people between the ages of 18 and 34 living as chil-

Also in Veneto, the majority of young people live with mum and dad...

dren in their family home, about 61%, an increase of almost 4 percentage points

compared to 2007.

...even when they've got a job.

Among these, just over one third are students, about 16%

are unemployed, while the majority, almost half, already have a job and could potentially support themselves and live alone.

About 25% of 18-34 year-olds live with a partner, outside their family home, and are almost equally divided between those who have children (13%) and those who do not (12%). However, while numbers of the latter are substantially stable compared to ten years ago, young couples with children are in sharp decline (20% in 2007), in line with previously mentioned family trends.

Finally, in 2017 only 8% of young people from Veneto lived alone, a slight increase compared to 2007; however, this is a marginal choice that still concerns the minority of young people.

Table 4.2.3 - Percentage of 18-34 year-olds by household situation. Veneto - 2007 and 2017

	2007	2017
Percentage of 18-34 year-olds who:		
are still living in their family home	57.5	61.2
live alone	6.3	8.1
live in a couple but do not have children	12.1	12.3
live in couple and have children	20.1	13.2

Source: Processing of Istat data from ISTAT by the Regione Veneto Statistical Office