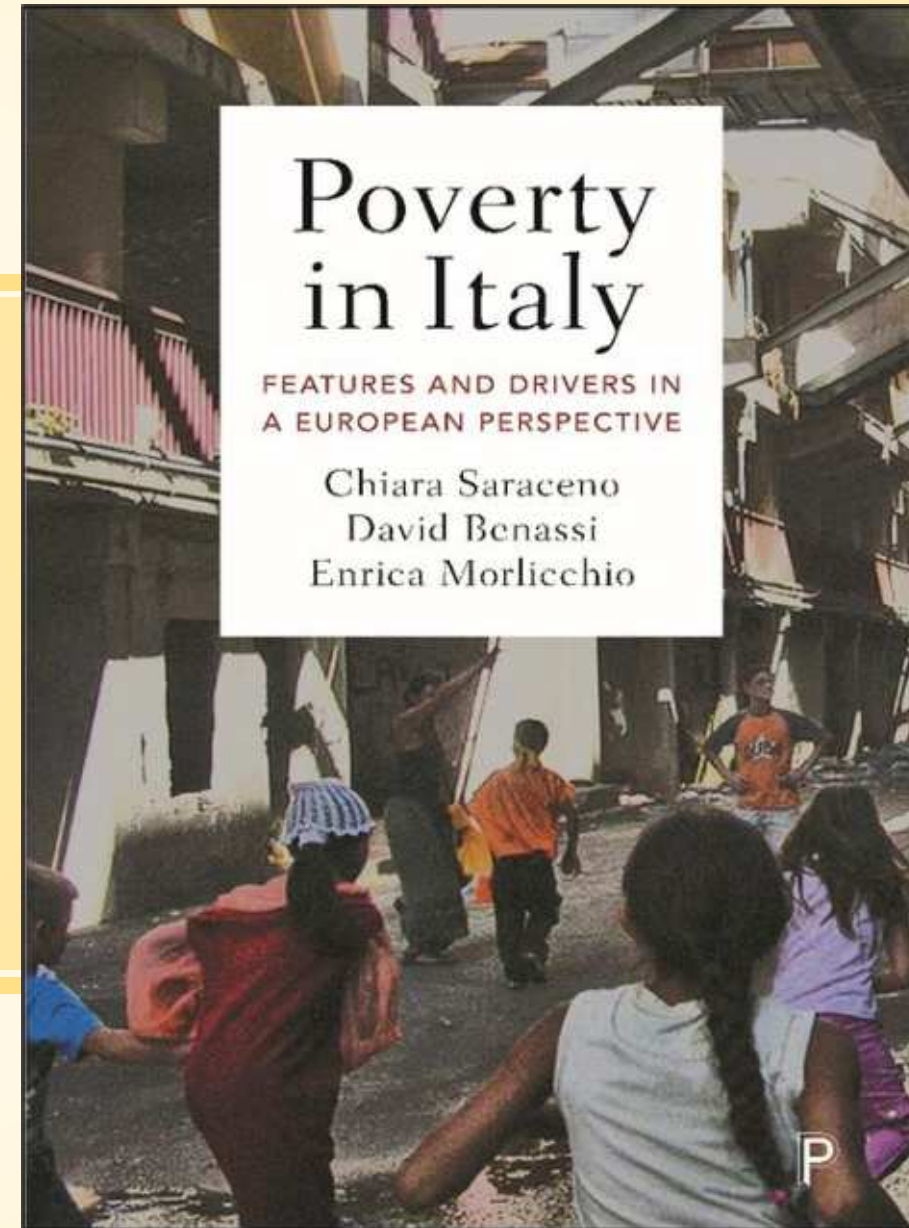


**C. Saraceno, D. Benassi and E. Morlicchio**  
**Poverty in Italy.**  
**Features and drivers in a European perspective**  
**Policy Press, 2020**

**David Benassi (University of Milano-Bicocca)**

**Premières rencontres Italie-Québec «Territoires, économies et sociétés»  
16 et 17 juin 2022 Université du Québec à Rimouski, campus de Lévis**



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Chiara Saraceno  
David Benassi  
Enrica Morlicchio

# La povertà in Italia



il Mulino

Saggi

# A regime approach

Poverty is a structural element of modern human societies:

In a Polanyian perspective, poverty is “the outcome of modes of regulation of social processes that, on the one hand, shape the system of opportunities and disadvantages, and on the other, construct some social groups as disadvantaged.”

# A regime approach

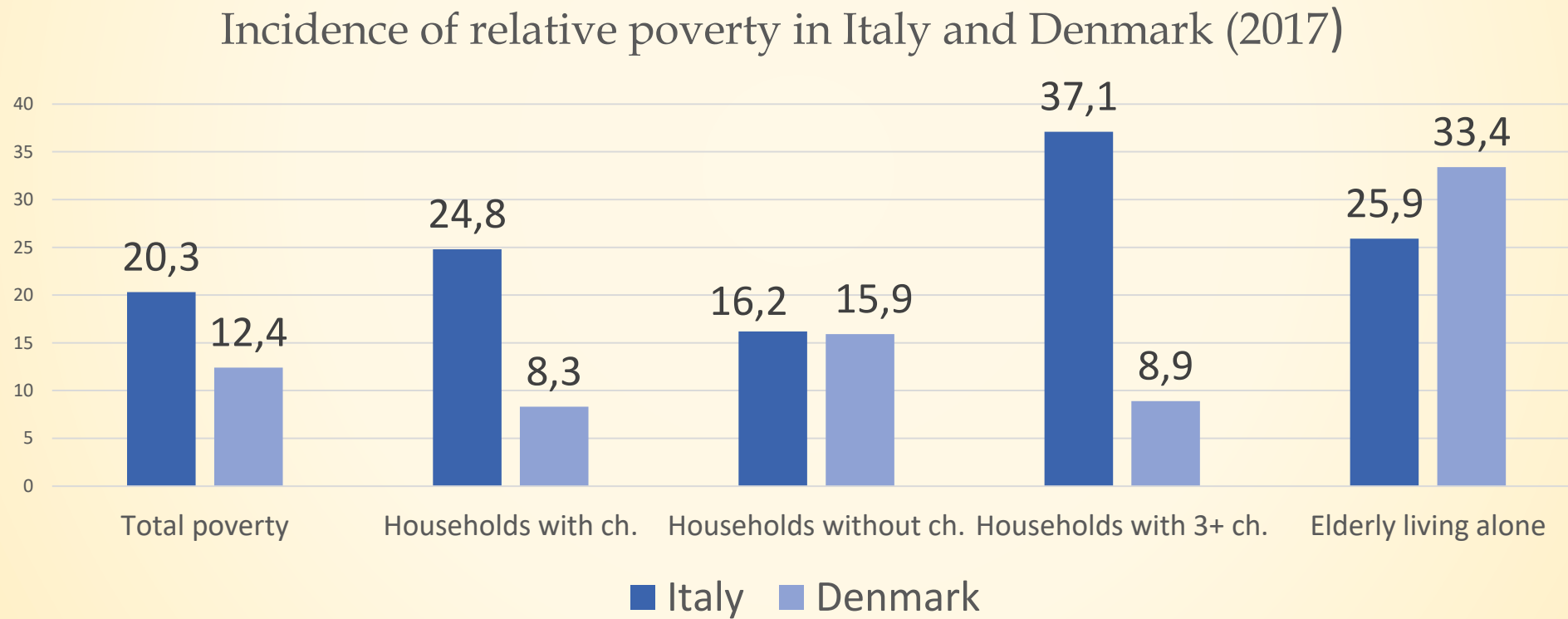
In other terms:

Poverty emerges from “a specific combination of labour market conditions, the balance between public and private (family) responsibility in buffering against social risks, a gender division of labour within families and within society, and social norms and cultural values. The incidence of poverty, its composition and how it is experienced by those concerned depend on the peculiar combination and interaction of these factors in a given context and in a given historical period”.

It's what we call **poverty regime**.

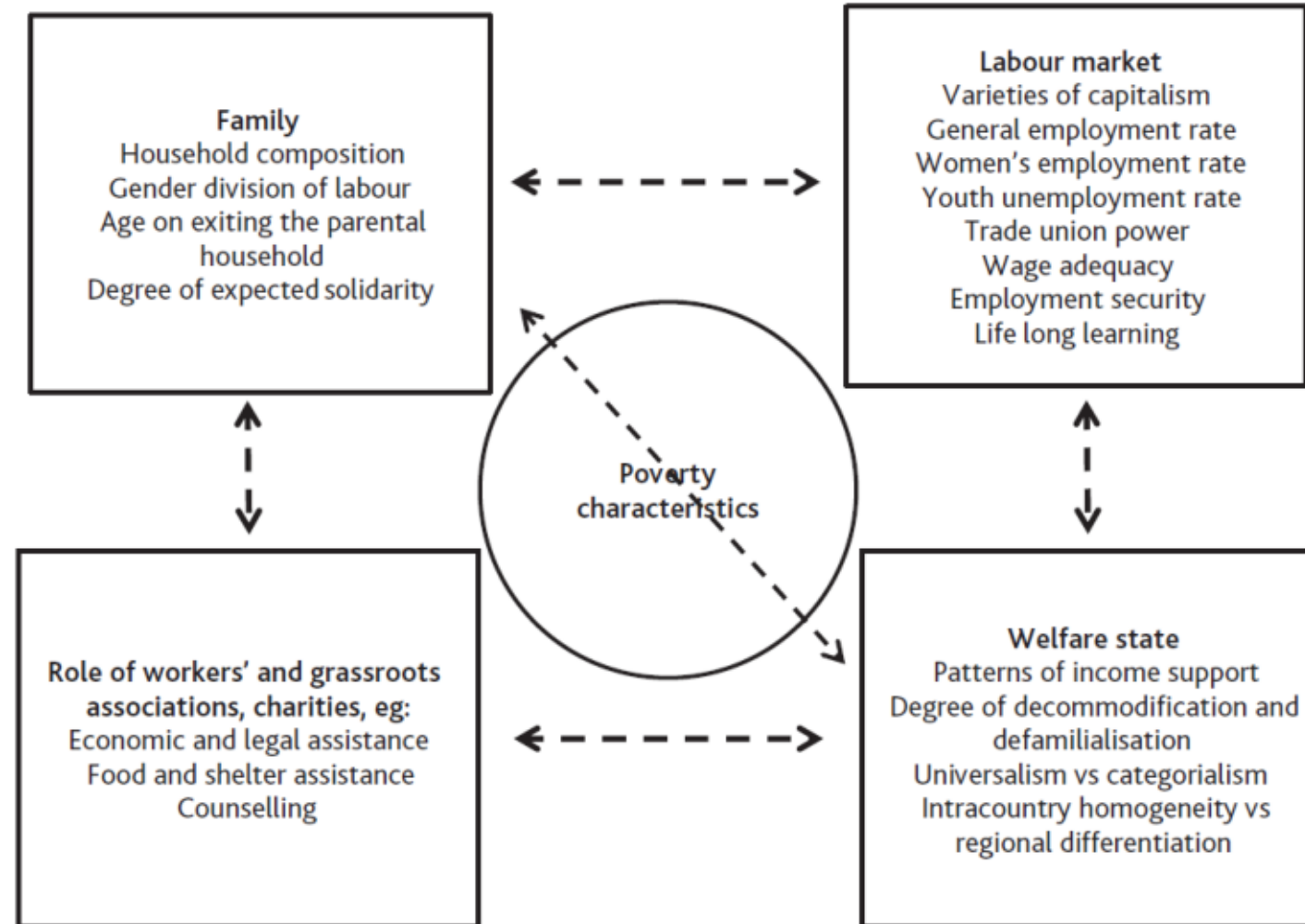
The risk of poverty can vary significantly between countries, due to different poverty regimes.

For instance, when we compare Italy and Denmark ...



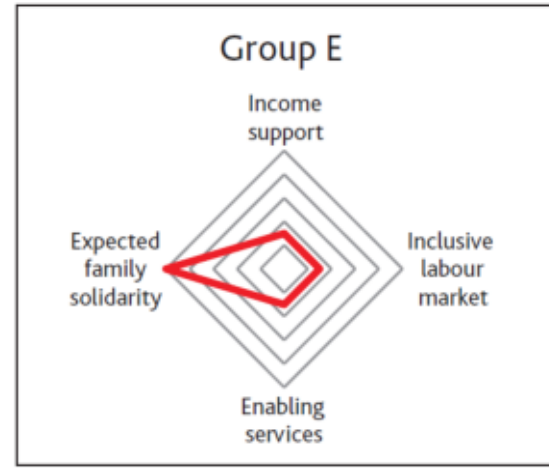
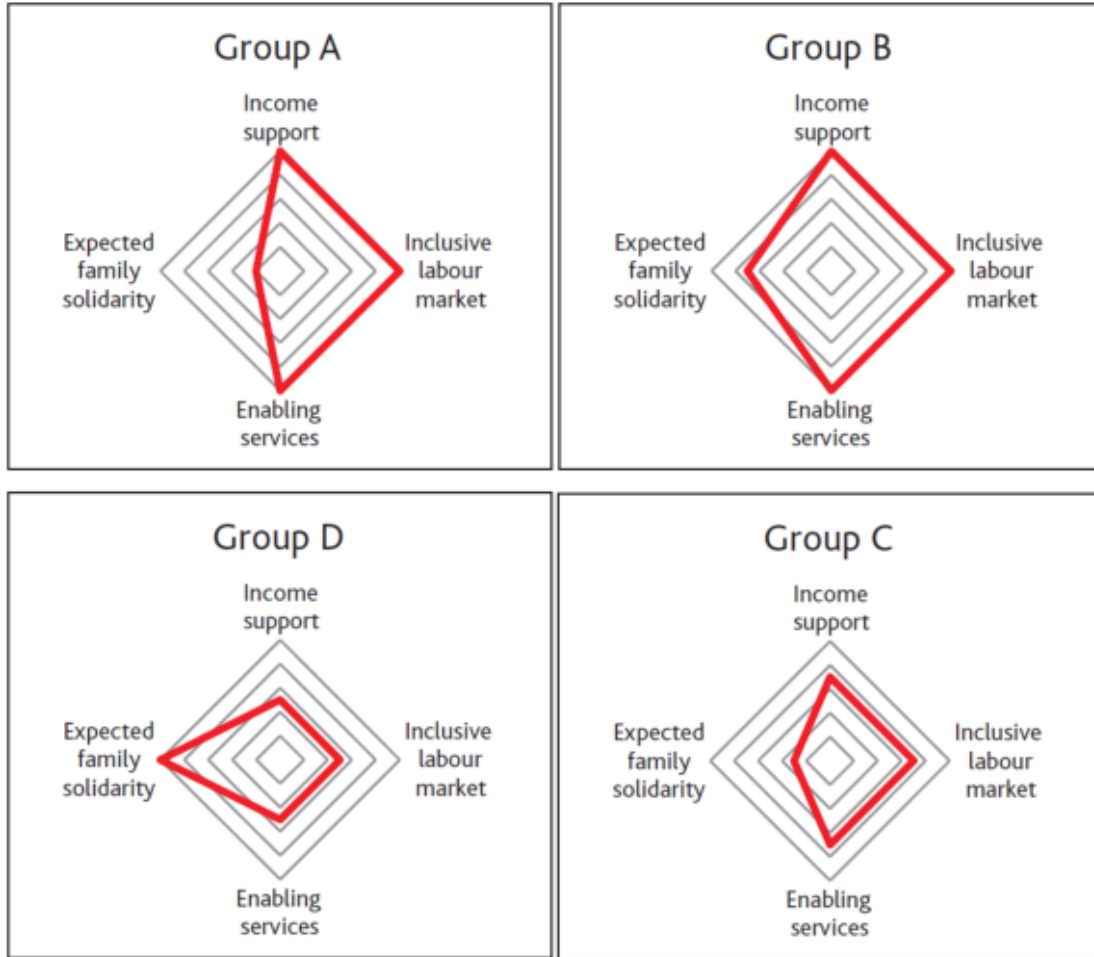
# An analytical model for studying poverty regimes

Figure 1.1: The interaction of formal and informal regulative institutions in shaping poverty regimes



# The regimes of poverty in Europe

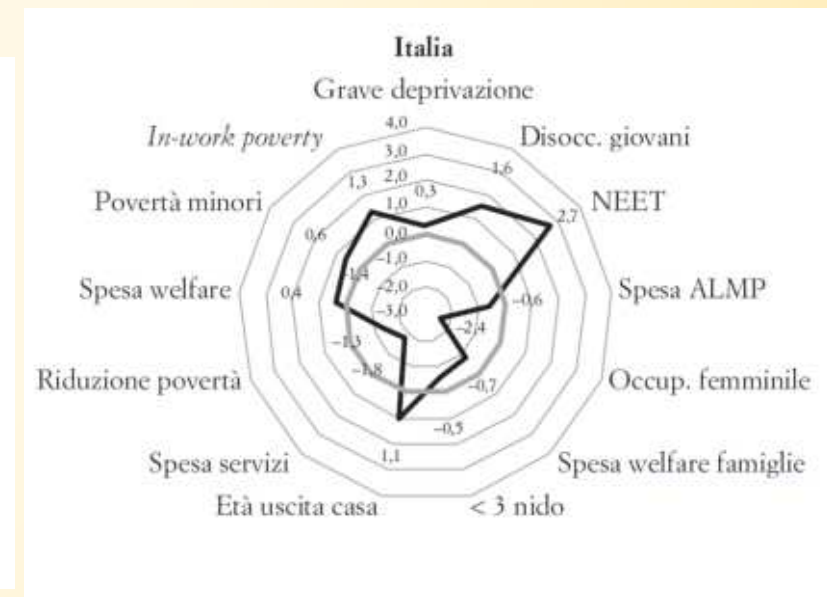
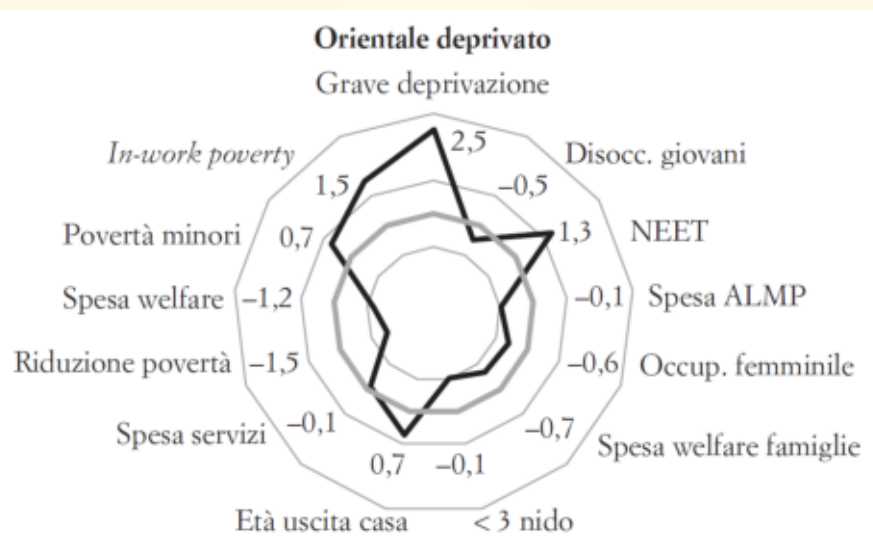
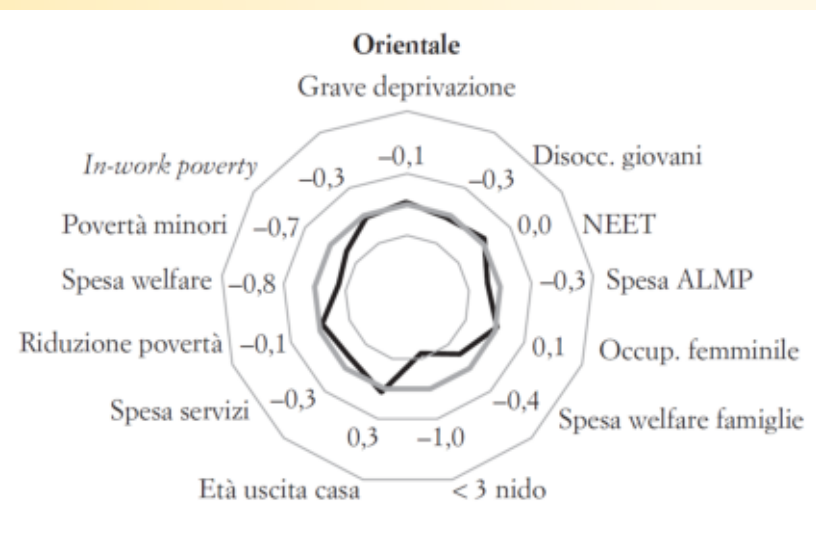
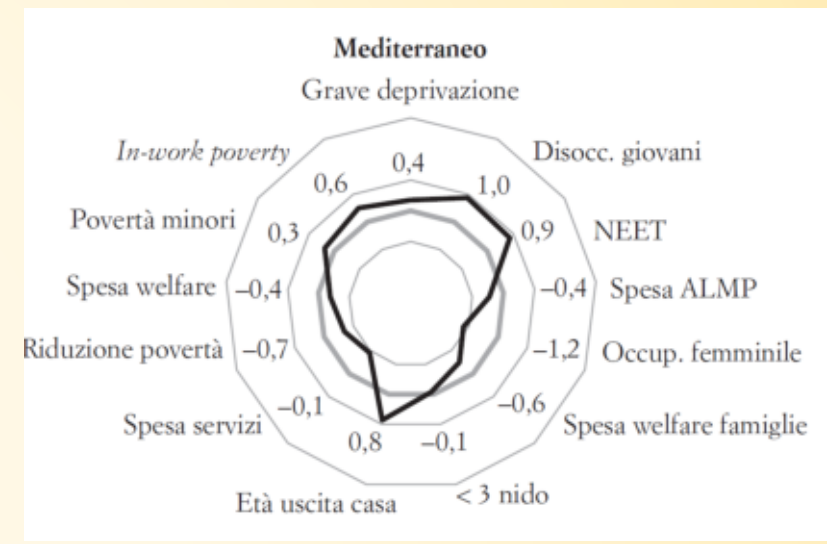
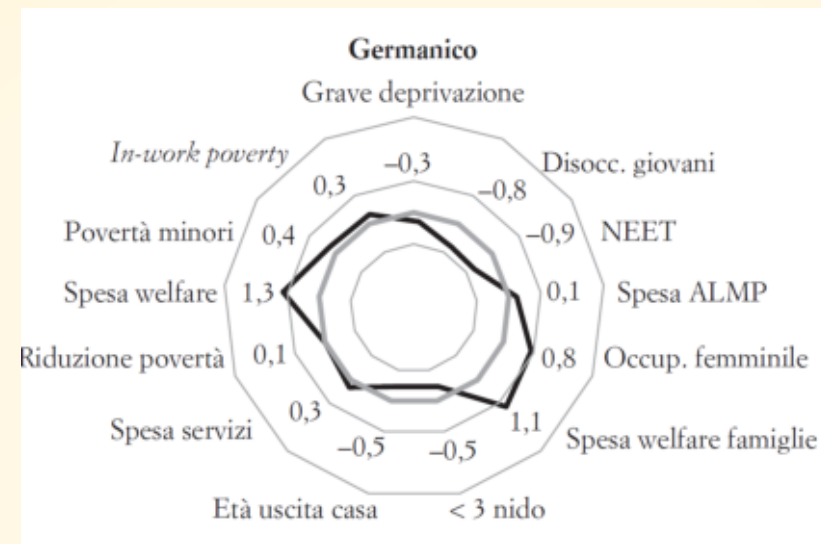
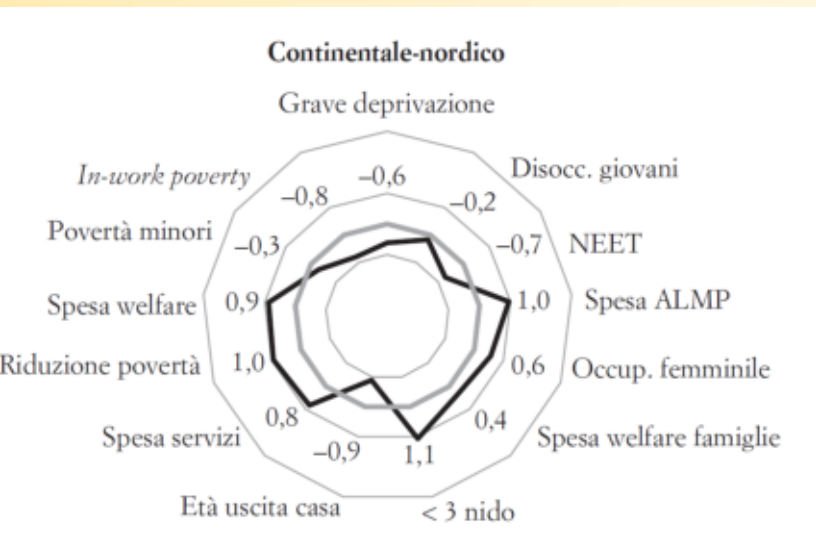
Figure 1.6: European poverty regimes



- A: Good performance, good outcomes, low expected family solidarity (Netherlands, Sweden, France, Denmark, Finland, Belgium, Slovenia)
  - B: Good performance, good outcomes, medium-high expected family solidarity (Austria, Germany, Luxembourg)
  - C: Medium performance, medium outcomes, low-medium expected family solidarity (UK, Ireland)
  - D: Low-medium performance, low-medium outcomes, high expected family solidarity (Italy, Spain, Portugal)
  - E: Low performance, low outcomes, high expected family solidarity (Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Lithuania, Slovakia, Hungary).
- Cyprus and Czech Republic are outliers.  
 Source: Based on European Commission (2014: Chapter 2); Saraceno and Keck (2010, 2011); Eurostat online database

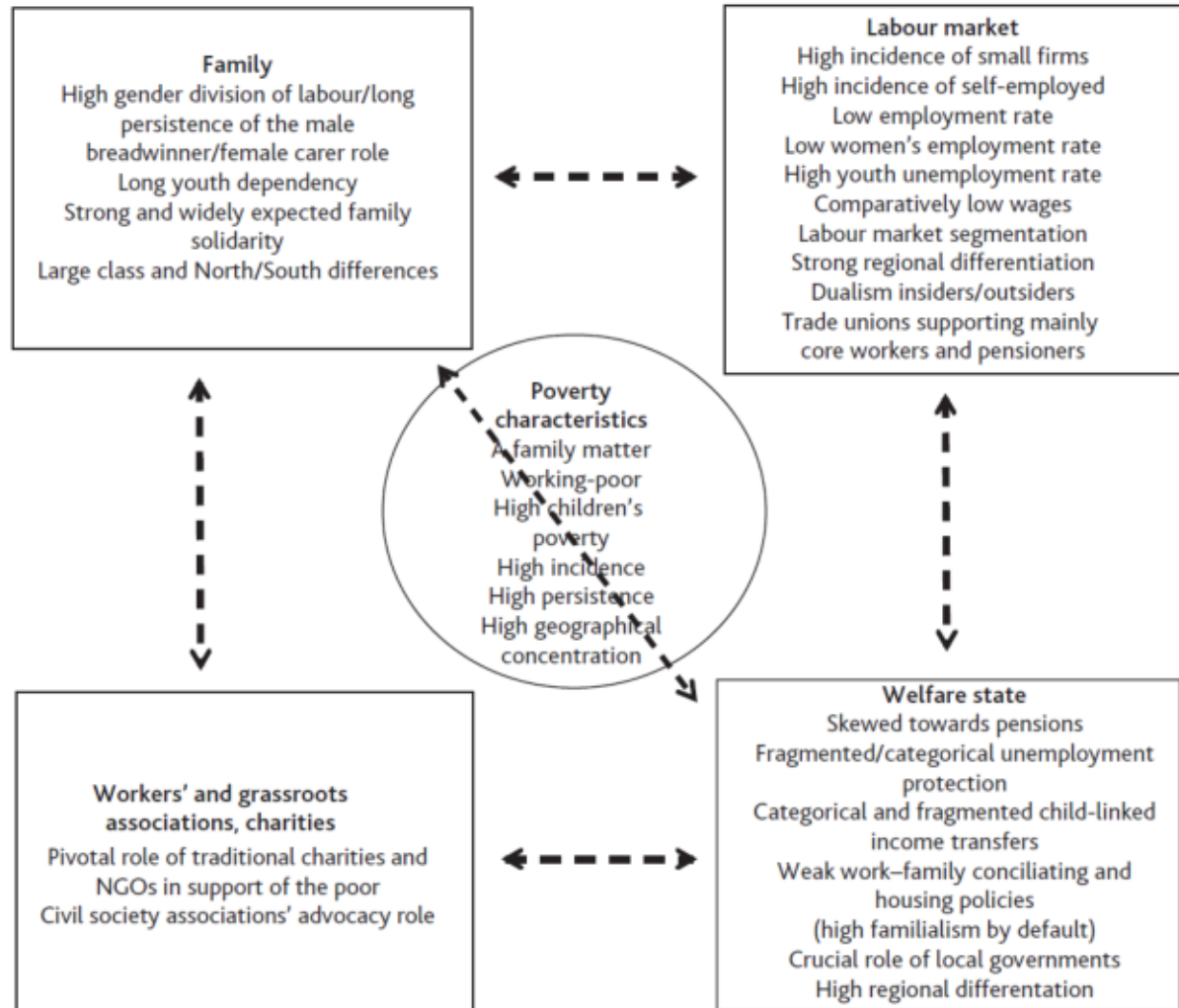


# The regimes of poverty in Europe 2



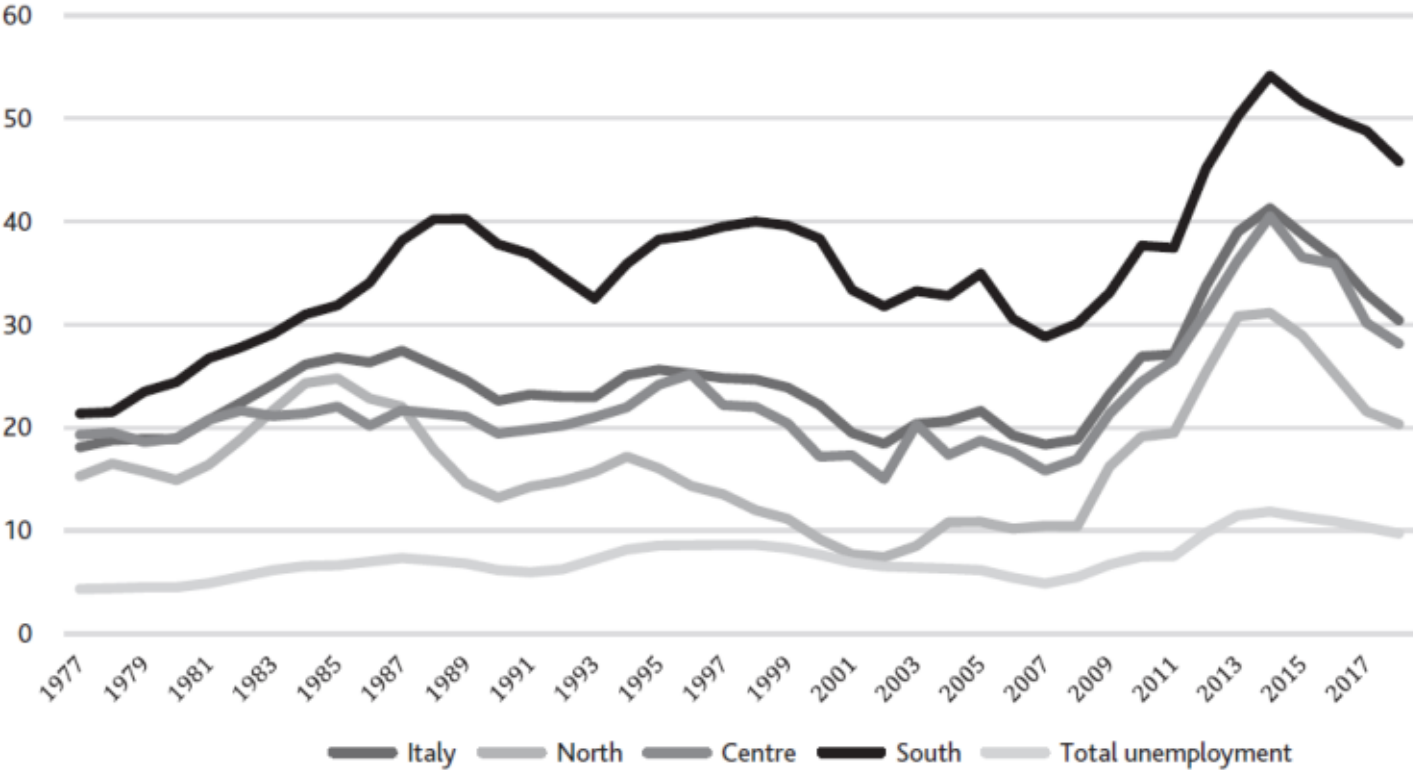
# The Italian poverty regime

Figure 1.7: Features of the Italian poverty regime



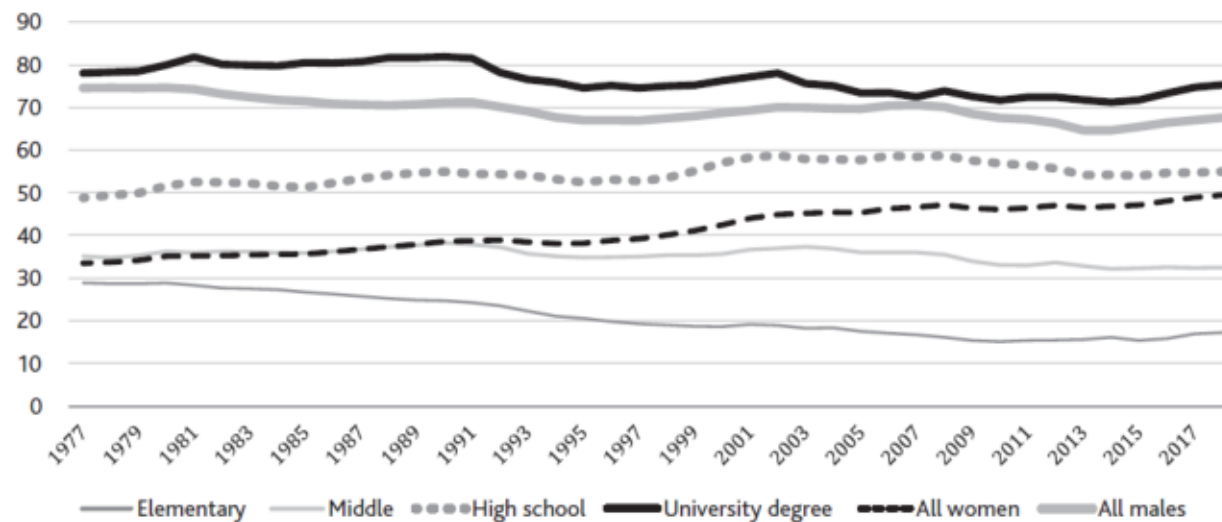
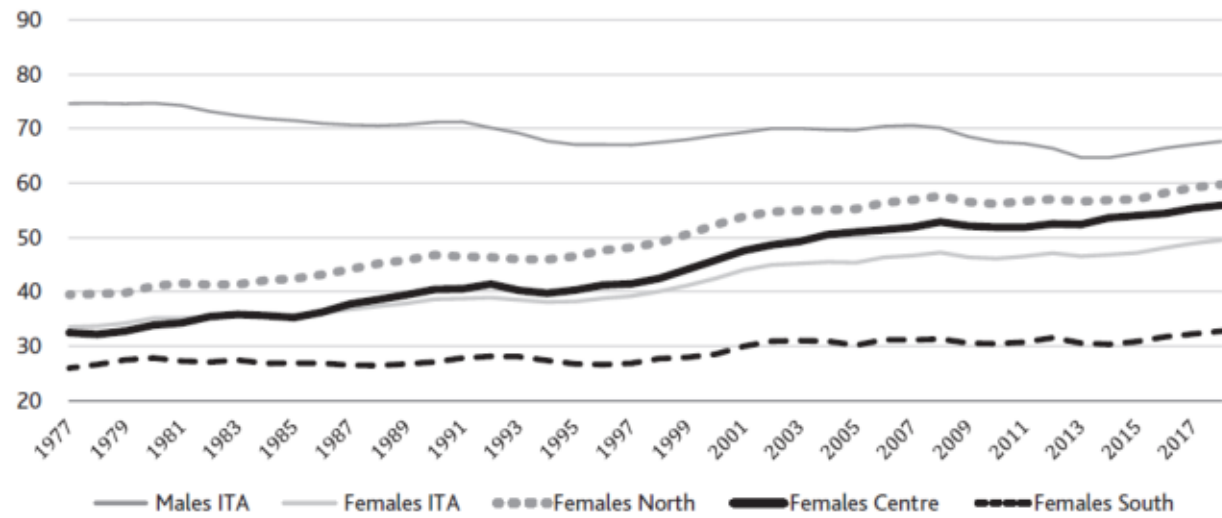
Summarizing:  
strong gender division of labour,  
forced familialism, labour market  
segmentation, insider/outsider  
dualism, fragmented welfare  
policies, and the importance of  
charities and NGOs

**Figure 1.10:** Youth unemployment rate, age 15–24, and total unemployment rates, by macro areas, 1977–2018



Source: Istat online database

**Figure 1.8: Men's and women's employment rates, by Italian macro areas (top panel) and by education (bottom panel), 1977–2018**



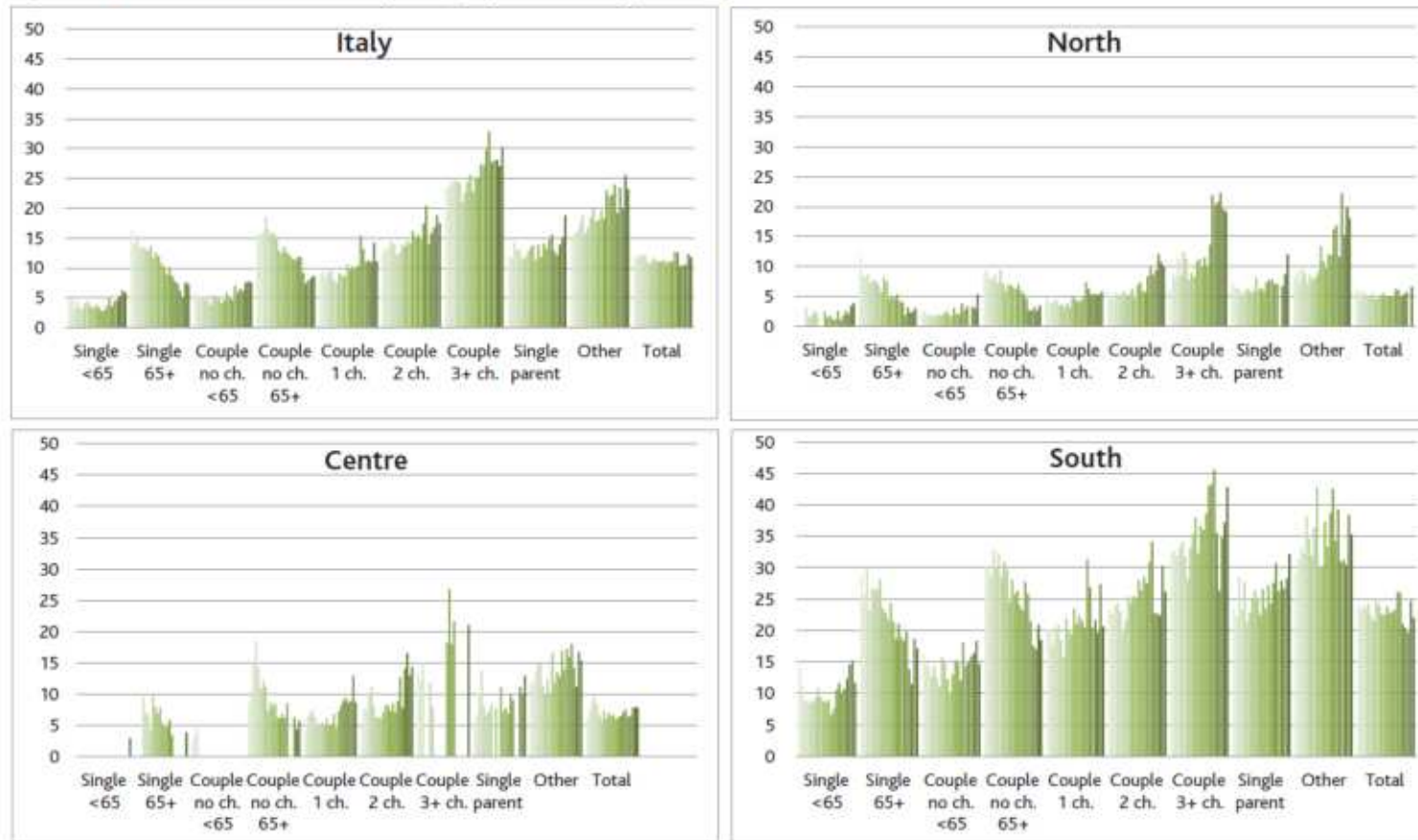
Source: Istat online database

# The Italian poverty regime

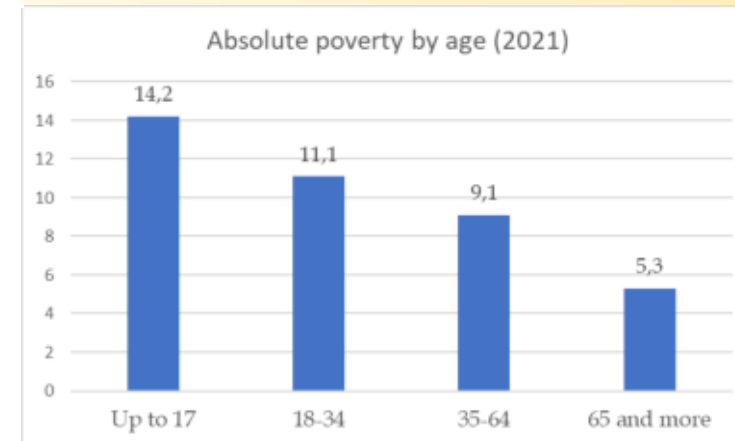
- A family matter
- The work is not enough
- Higher risk in the South
- Migrants as the “new” subjects of poverty

# A family matter

Figure 4.2: Trends in the incidence of poverty by household type in Italy and macro areas, 1997–2018



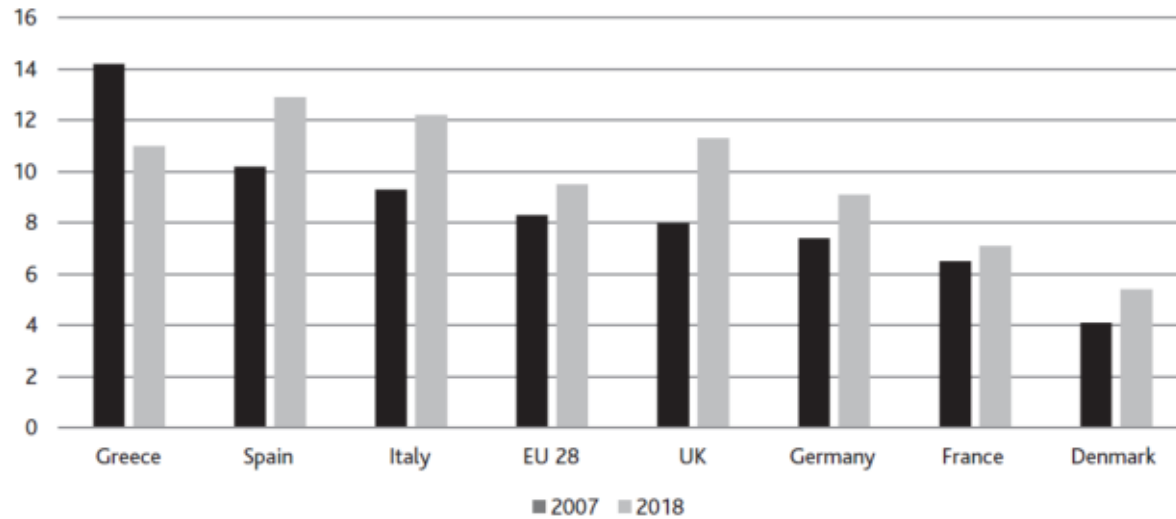
Note: Data missing in blank areas due to insufficient cases.  
 ch. = child(ren).  
 Source: Istat online database



Very low female employment rate, male breadwinner, small firms, low salaries, ineffective welfare policies=high poverty in households with children

# The work is not enough

Figure 5.1: In-work poverty in selected EU countries – % of employed people aged 18 or over, 2007 vs 2018



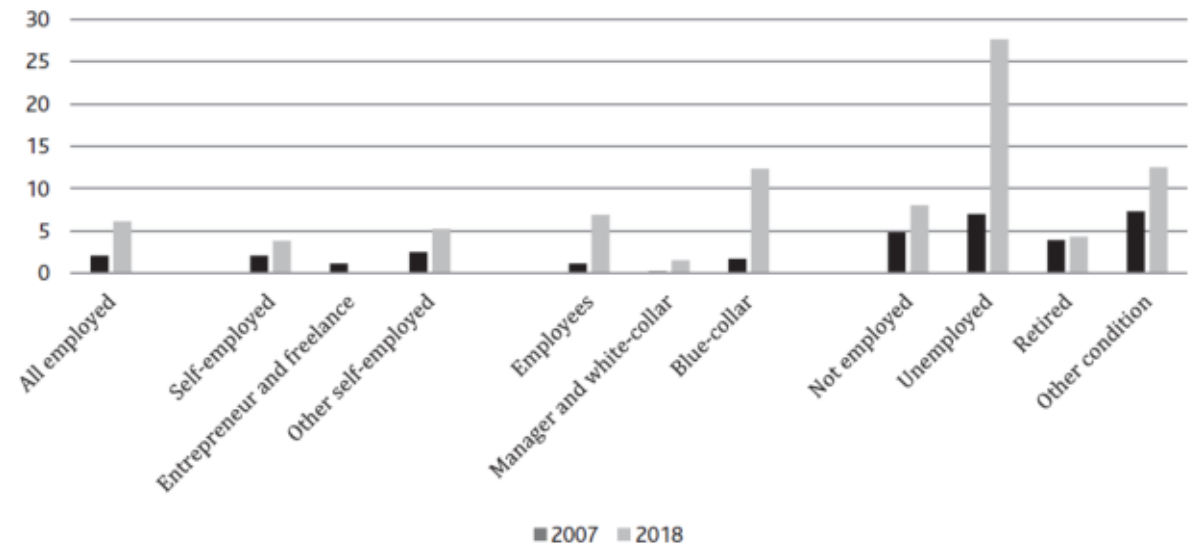
Source: Eurostat online database

Precarization of work, low employment rates, informal economy, low salaries, lack of redistributive policies

Growth of in-work poverty after 2008

13% of blue-collar households are in poverty, highest rate after unemployed

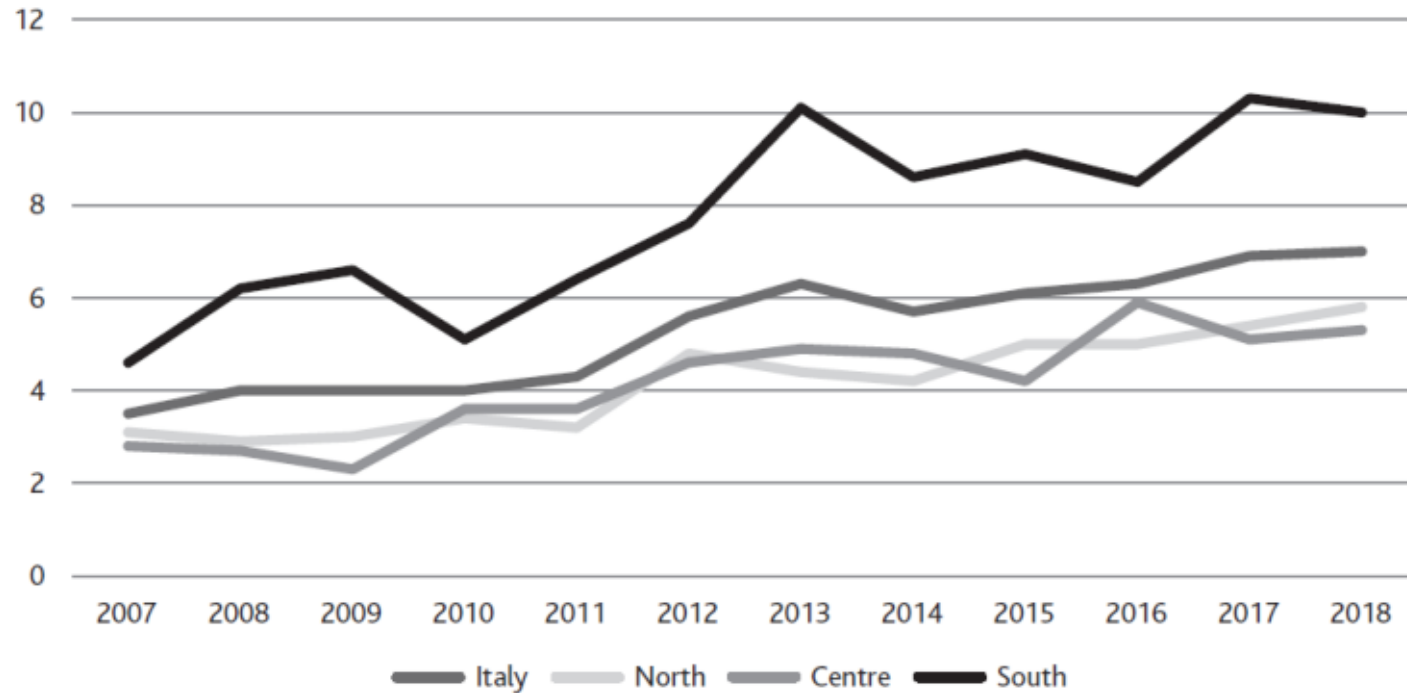
Figure 5.2: Share of household absolute poverty by occupational status of the main income earner, 2007 vs 2018



Source: Istat online database

# Higher risk in the South

Figure 4.4: Incidence of household absolute poverty in Italy and macro areas, 2007–18



Source: Istat online database

A feature of poverty regime since the unification of the country, with a widening gap ... but growth in the North as well

About 2 millions of households in poverty, or 5.6 millions of individuals.

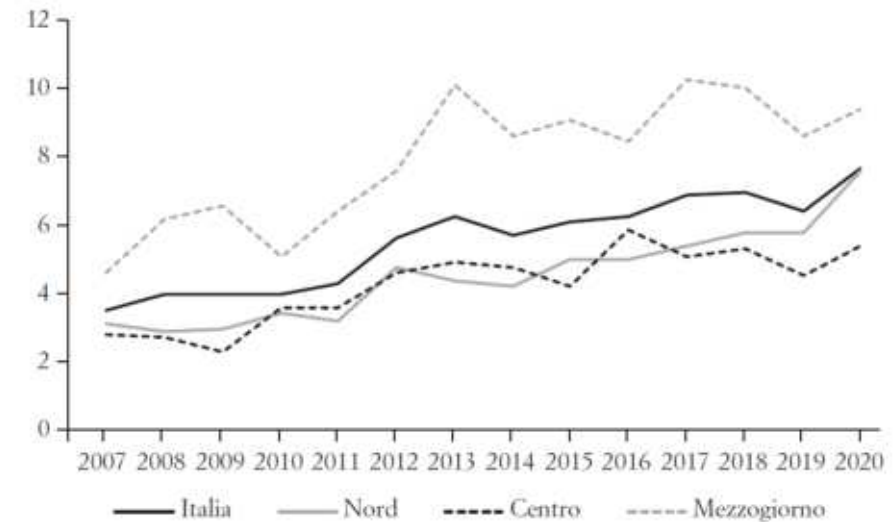


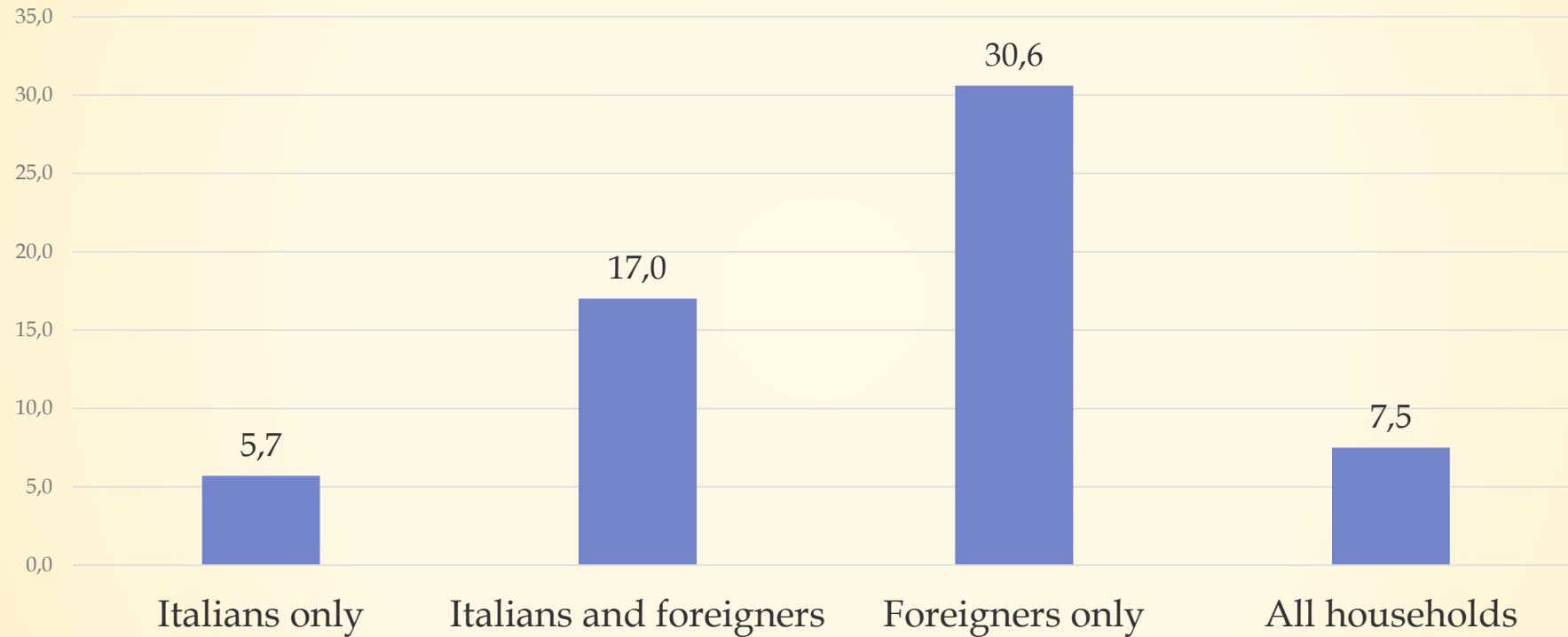
FIG. 4.4. Incidenza della povertà familiare assoluta in Italia per macroaree (2005-20).

Fonte: Database online ISTAT.



# Migrants

Absolute households poverty by presence of foreigners  
(2021)



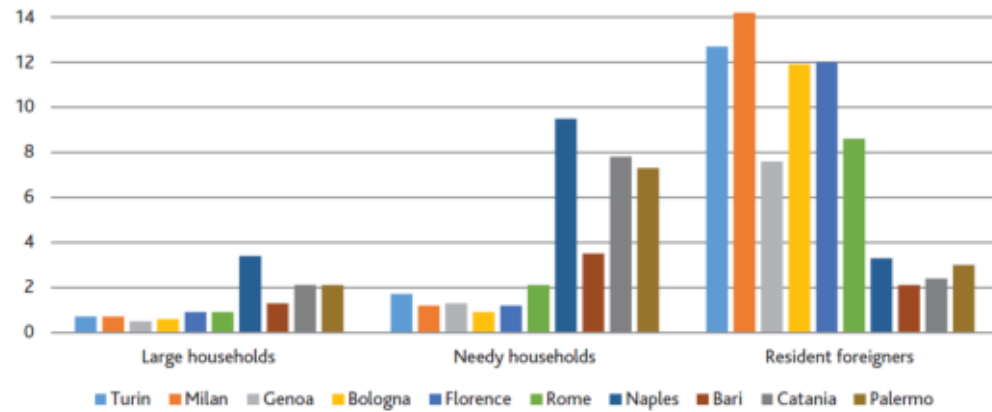
Foreigners cumulate all the disadvantages ... plus discrimination

# Urban poverty

Strong territorial differentiation in terms of social and economic development, welfare institutions, cultural traits: a strong tradition of studies on this issue (for instance Bagnasco 1977).

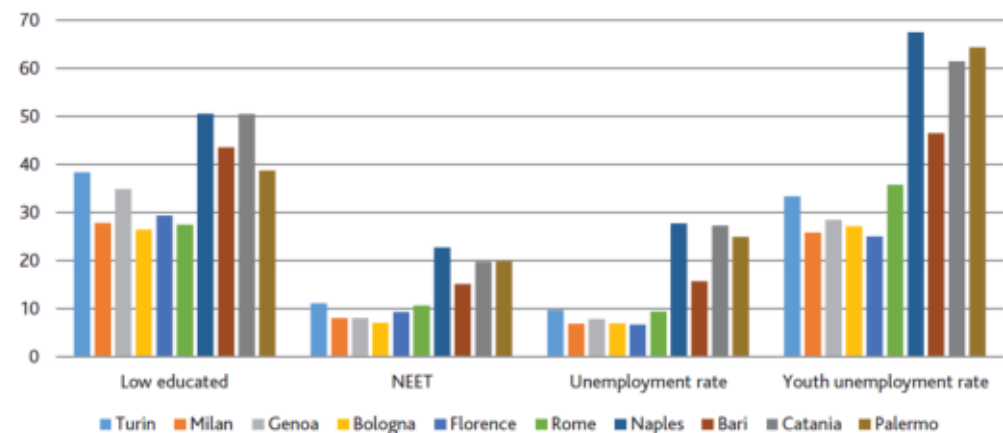
An attempt to describe poverty distribution in the 10 target cities, despite the lack of data at sub-municipal level.

Figure 6.1: Incidence at city level of sociodemographic factors of disadvantage



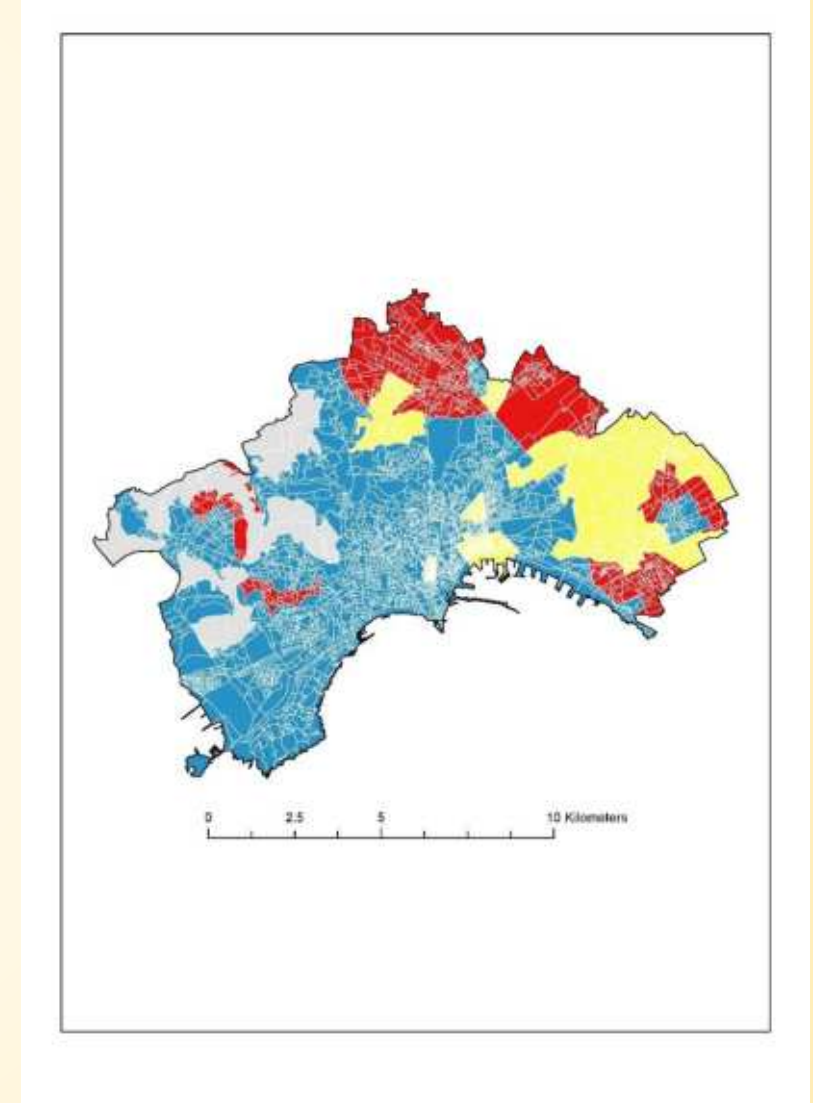
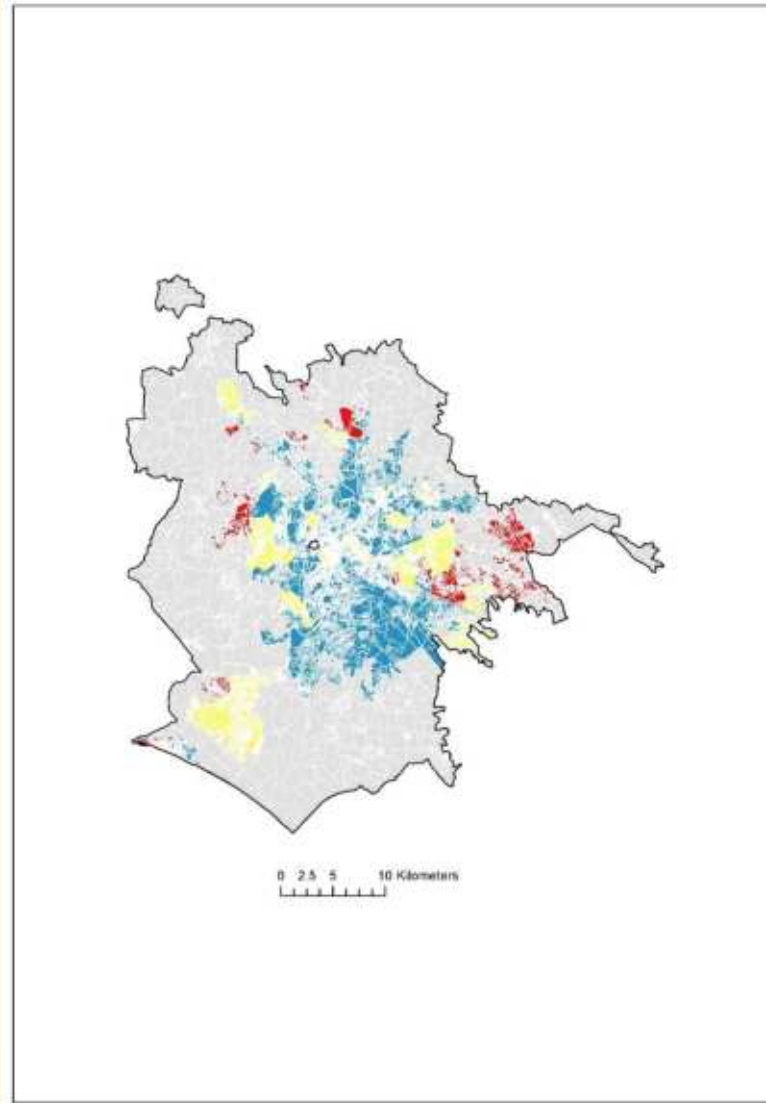
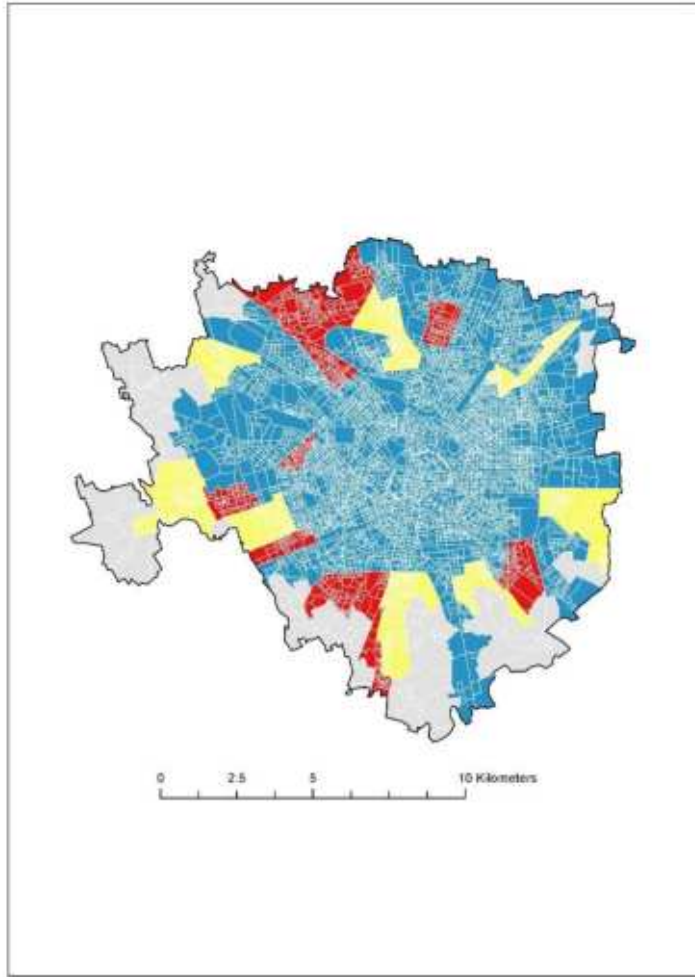
Source: Census data, 2011

Figure 6.2: Incidence at city level of educational and occupational factors of disadvantage



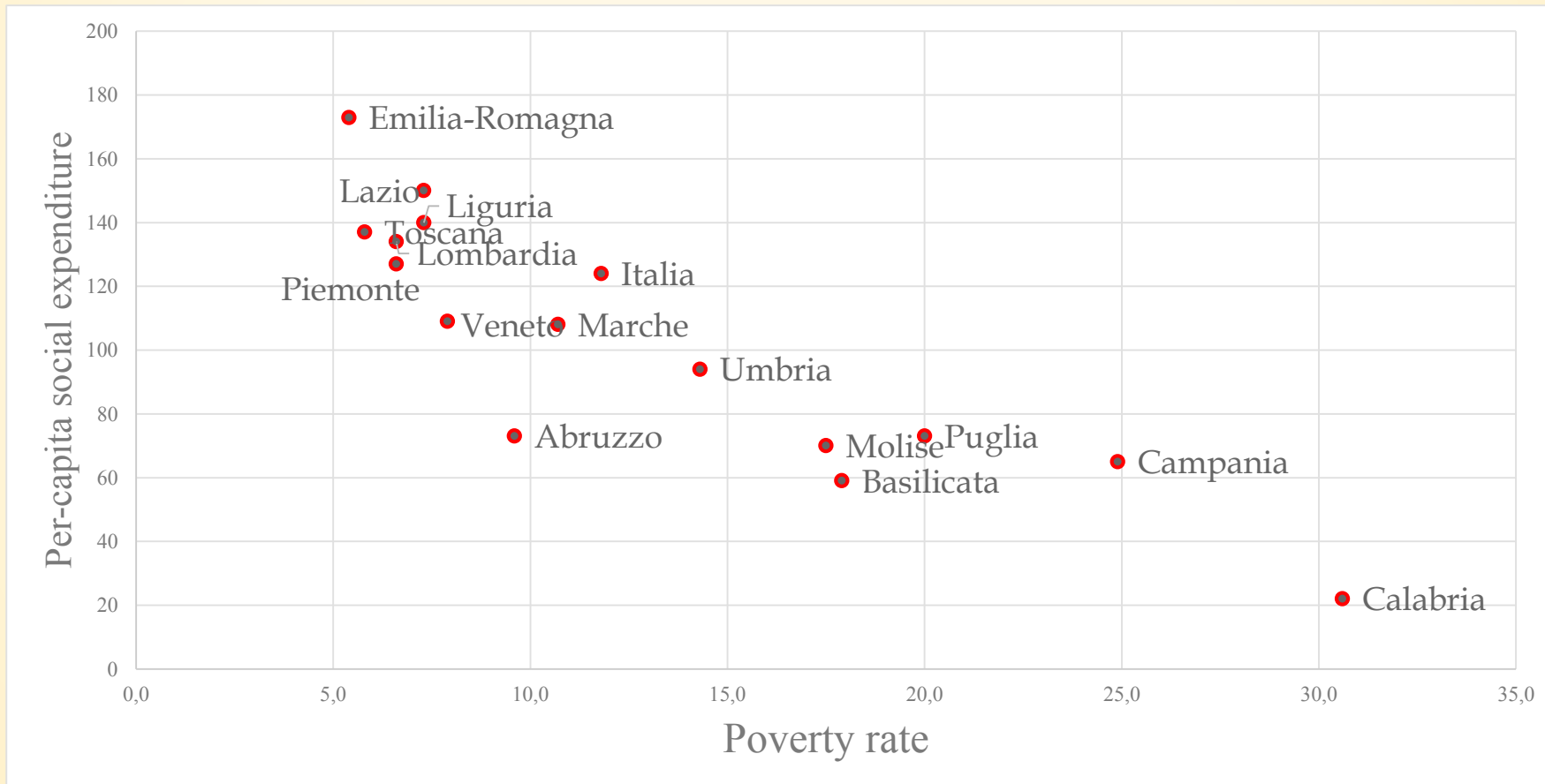
Source: Census data, 2011

# Urban poverty



# Policies against poverty

A social assistance system characterized by strong fragmentation, scarce attention to anti-poverty policies, until the introduction of a universal minimum income benefit in 2019 (last in the EU ...)



# Policies against poverty

Two relevant changes in the last 3 years:

- 1) The introduction of a minimum income scheme (Reddito di Cittadinanza) in 2019, a universal benefit to all households in poverty.
- 2) The introduction of a universal and progressive family allowance (Assegno Unico e Universale)

A strong increase (since 2014) of expenditure against poverty, but still a strong political opposition against the RdC, and attempts to cancel it.

