

5. Social relationships¹

In the last year, domain's indicators have shown substantial stability with some signs of improvement. There were no variations in satisfaction with family and friends and voluntary activity.

The share of population referring to have relatives, friends or neighbours to rely on stabilizes after the decrease registered in 2017.

Among the signs of improvement, the number of nonprofit institutions, social participation, the financing of associations and the generalized trust increase. Furthermore, civic and political participation interrupts the negative trend started in 2014.

The longer-term analysis, however, shows a different picture, with most of the indicators in decline and one stable (the share of people who declare to have relatives, friends or neighbours to rely on). The indicator on nonprofit institutions shows the most positive trend, going from 50.7 to 57.9 institutions for 10,000 inhabitants between 2011 and 2017 (Table 1).

Table 1. Social relationships indicators: value for the latest available year. Percentage variations on the previous year and on 2010

INDICATOR	Latest available year value	% variation compared with the previous year	% variation (compared with 2010)
1. Satisfaction with family relations (% , 2018)	33.2	Stability	Deterioration
2. Satisfaction with friends relations (% , 2018)	23.2	Stability	Deterioration
3. People to rely on (% , 2018) (a)	80.8	Stability	Stability
4. Social participation (% , 2018)	23.9	Improvement	Deterioration
5. Civic and political participation (% , 2018) (b)	58.8	Stability	Deterioration
6. Voluntary activity (% , 2018)	10.5	Stability	Improvement
7. Association funding (% , 2018)	14.5	Improvement	Deterioration
8. Nonprofit organizations (per 10,000 ab., 2017) (b)	57.9	Improvement	Improvement
9. Generalized trust (% , 2018)	21.0	Improvement	Deterioration

— Comparison not available ■ Improvement ■ Stability ■ Deterioration

a) 2010 data not available, variation based on 2013 data;
b) 2010 data not available, variation based on 2011 data.

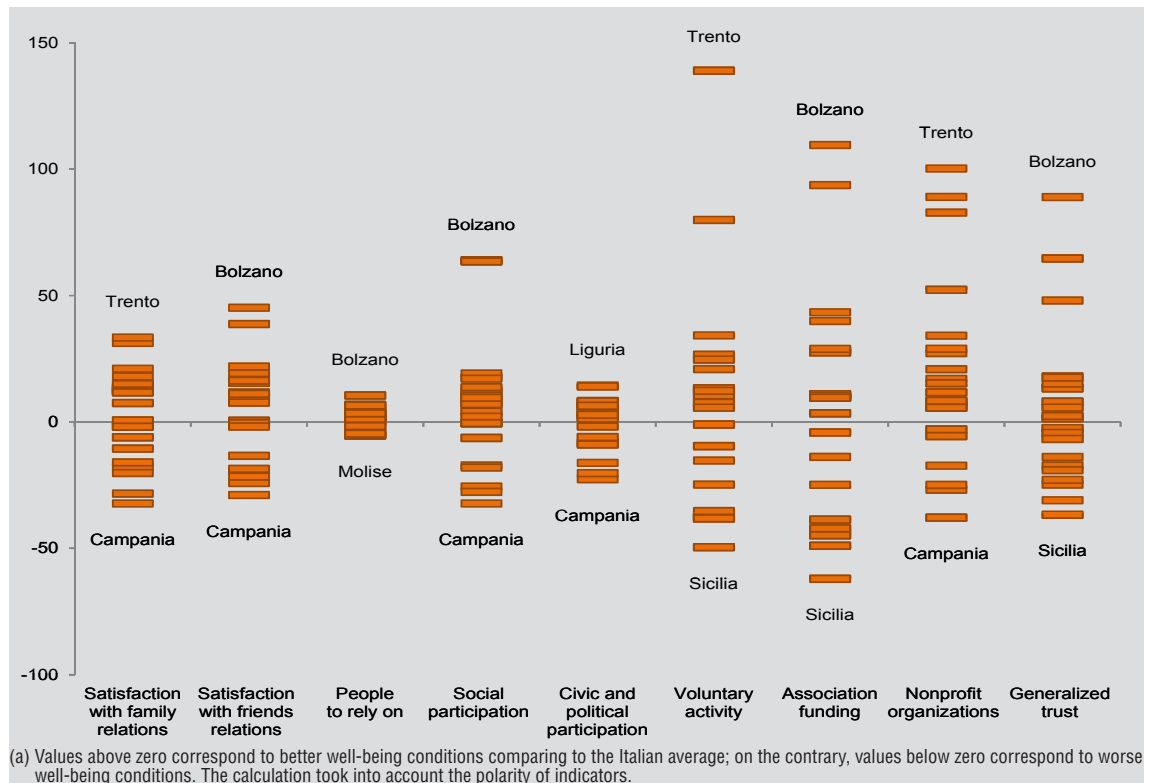
Note: variations between two points in time above 1% are considered positive (in green), below -1% are considered negative (in red). Variations between -1 and +1% refer to stability (in grey).

The analysis by region shows a highly differentiated situation (Figure 1).

The share of population reporting trust towards others is close to 40% in the province of Bolzano (+ 89% compared to the average), and it is three times higher than that recorded in Sicilia (13.3%). The territorial gap is even greater for voluntary activity, associations funding and the presence of nonprofit institutions.

¹ This chapter was edited by Miria Savioli with contributions from: Massimo Lori and Sabrina Stoppiello.

Figure 1. Percentage variation for Social relationships indicators comparing to the value for Italy by region. Latest available year (a)



In the province of Trento, the share of the population aged 14 and over who carries out voluntary activities (25.1%) is 139% higher than the average and almost five times higher than that recorded in Sicilia (5.3%).

The share of population funding associations exceeds 30% in the province of Bolzano (+110% compared to the average) and is minimum in Sicily (-62% compared to the average). The most homogeneous indicator is the potential help network: in Bolzano the proportion of population referring to have people to rely on reaches 89.3%, compared to the 76.5% in Molise. The indicator on civic and political participation shows also a substantial homogeneity among regions, with the maximum value in Liguria (+14.5% compared to the average) and the minimum in Campania (-22% compared to the average, Figure 1).

The provinces of Bolzano and Trento reach the best values for most of the indicators, with the only exception of Liguria that, together with Emilia-Romagna, reaches the highest level of civic and political participation. On the other hand, the worst values for all domain's indicators are recorded in Campania and Sicilia.

International comparison

In Europe, the measurement of social relations is based on non-harmonized reference systems. However, the indicator on participation in voluntary activities, developed by Eurostat, and the indicator on the potential help network, calculated by the OECD, are here used to compare information on social relationships, even though the indicators are not identical to those included in the Italian Bes framework.

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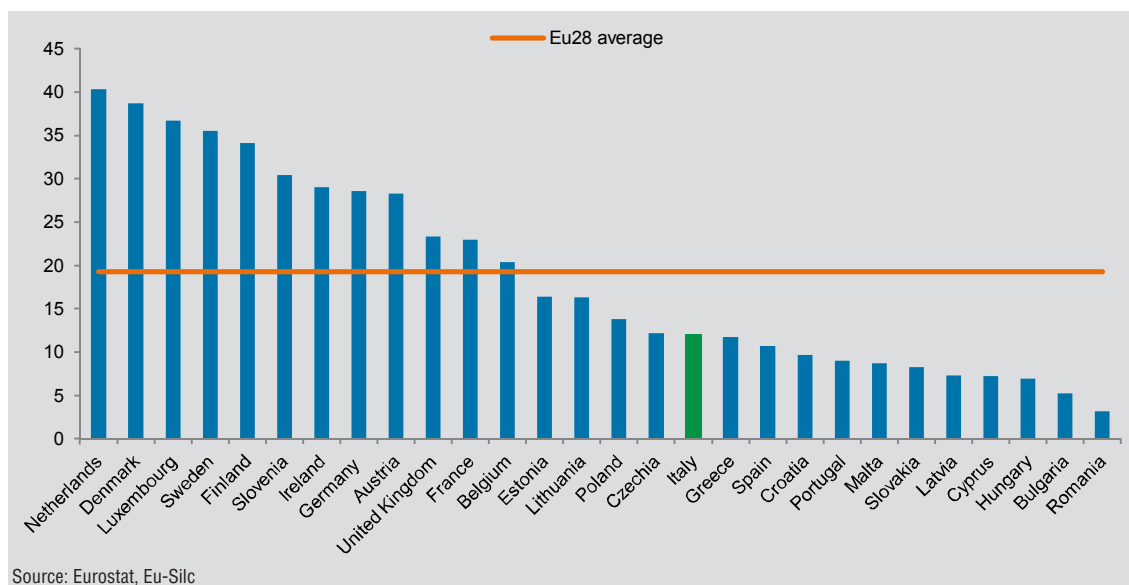
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Based on the results of the 2015 Eu-Silc survey, almost one-fifth (19.3%) of the Eu28's adult population participated in formal voluntary activities, a slightly higher share (22.2%) participated in informal voluntary activities while 12.8% participated in active citizenship activities.² Northern European countries show the highest levels of participation: the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and Denmark, while in Portugal, Spain, Greece and Italy, where the habit of activating relationships outside the family or the circle of friends is less widespread, the proportions are much lower than the Eu28 average.

The participation in formal voluntary activities reached more than one third of the adult population in the Netherlands, Denmark, Luxembourg, Sweden and Finland. By contrast, there were Member States where less than 1 in 10 adults participated in formal voluntary activities, with the lowest share in Romania (3.2%).

Italy ranks 17th (12%) near countries such as the Czech Republic (12.2%) and Greece (11.7%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Persons aged 16 and over who participated in formal voluntary activities in the Eu28 countries. Year 2015. Percentage values

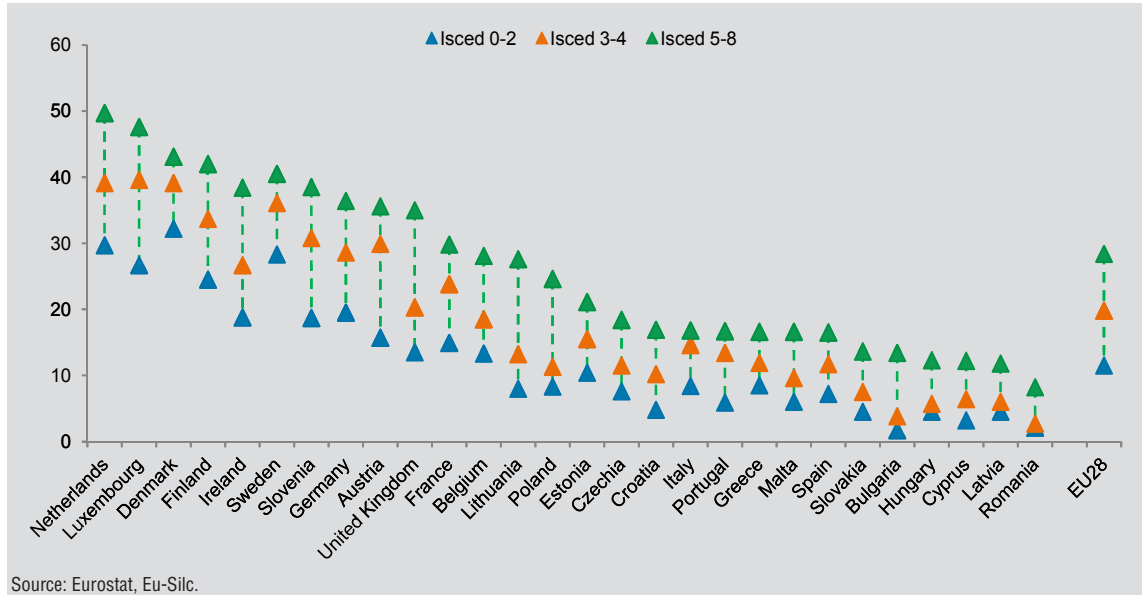


An analysis by educational attainment level shows that in the Eu28 countries there is a gap of almost 17 percentage points in the levels of participation between people with high and low educational level.

The share of the population who participated in formal voluntary activities exceeds 28% among people with a high level of education (degree or more), while it reaches the minimum among people with a low educational level (11.5%). The positive association between education level and voluntary activities is recorded in all countries (Figure 3).

² In 2015, an ad hoc module on social and cultural participation was included in the Eu-Silc survey; it included some questions on the intensity of family and friendship relationships, voluntary activity (formal and informal) and social engagement. According to the definition used in the Eu-Silc survey, with “formal volunteering” is meant doing activities in an organisation, group or association in the 12 months preceding the interview for free; “informal volunteering” means free activities carried out on one’s own account, such as providing help to non-cohabiting people (cooking, shopping, etc.), taking care of abandoned animals, cleaning forests or beaches. Active citizenship” means attending a party, trade union or civil rights association, signing petitions, sending letters of protest to a politician or newspaper, participating in a demonstration.

Figure 3. Persons aged 16 and over who participated in formal voluntary activities by level of education. Eu28 countries. Year 2015. Percentage values



Italy has a low gap in participation levels compared to the Eu28 average (8.4 percentage points). The share of the population participating in formal voluntary activities is 16.8% among people with high educational levels, twice that of the population with a low educational level (8.4%).

As in almost all European Union countries, even in Italy the great majority of the population can count on the help of friends or relatives. The indicator used by the Oecd, from the Gallup survey, estimates that in 2015-2017 the 89% of people aged 15 and over can count on the help of friends or relatives in case of need.

The northern European countries, together with Luxembourg and Spain, are at the top of the ranking, while Greece, Portugal, Latvia, Poland and Hungary are at the bottom. Italy is above the Oecd average (92%).³

Analysis of national data

Satisfaction with family and friends relations is stable

In 2018, satisfaction with family and friends relations remains stable: the share of people aged 14 and over who are very satisfied with family relations is 33.2% and satisfaction with friends relations is 23.2%.

After the drop recorded in 2017, also the share of the population that have relatives, friends or neighbours to rely on is stable (80.8%).

³ The values estimated by the Gallup survey and the Istat survey Aspects of daily life with which the indicator of this domain "People to rely on" is calculated are not comparable for several reasons: in the Gallup survey neighbours are excluded but cohabiting partners are included while in the Istat survey neighbours are included; the Gallup survey targets people aged 15 years and over, while the Istat survey targets people aged 14 years and over; finally, survey techniques differ in terms of sampling, administration and data processing.

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High generational differences in satisfaction with friends relations

Satisfaction with family and friends relations and the availability of relatives, friends or neighbours to rely on do not show gender differences, but they show age differences.

Satisfaction with family relations is higher among young people aged 14-19 (40%) and adults up to 44 years (around 36%). Satisfaction with friends relations is also higher among young people, for whom the network of friendship is particularly important.

The levels of satisfaction with the friends' network decrease evidently with increasing age, to reach the lowest value among older population (14.3% in the population aged 75 and over). Also the availability of relatives, friends or neighbours to rely on decreases with age: it is higher among young people aged 14-34 (over 86%), then it drops and reaches the lowest value among the population aged 75 and over (71.2%). Generational differences, however, are less marked than those observed for the satisfaction with friends.

Voluntary activity is stable

In 2018, the share of people that have funded associations is 14.5%, while 10.5% of population have performed free activities for voluntary associations or groups in the last 12 months (it was 10.4% in 2017).

In Italy, as we have seen, voluntary activity involves a lower share of population than the Eu28 average (Figure 2). In particular, studies show that employed people and people with young children have greater difficulties in taking part in voluntary activity.⁴

Both indicators show no gender differences, while they show differences by age group.

Association funding is not widespread among young people, it reaches its maximum among people aged 45-74, with values between 18% and 19%.

For voluntary activity, the age differences are lower, with the highest percentages among young people aged 14-24 and adult aged 45-64 (Figure 4).

Still low, but improving the generalized trust

In Italy, the share of population feeling that most people are worthy of trust is very low: in 2018 only 21% of people aged 14 and over feels that most people are worthy of trust. The figure shows a slight growth compared to 2017 (when it was 19.8%).

The generalised trust is more widespread among males (22.5% against 19.6% for females) (Figure 4).

The age differences are small and the values drop significantly only among those aged 75 and over (15.2%) (Figure 4).

Social participation is slightly increasing, civic and political participation is stable

Between 2017 and 2018, the share of population that have performed at least one social participation activity (excluding volunteering) raised from 22.8% to 23.9%.

The negative trend started in 2014 for civic and political participation stops: in 2018 the percentage remains stable compared to the previous year (58.8% compared to 59.4% in 2017).

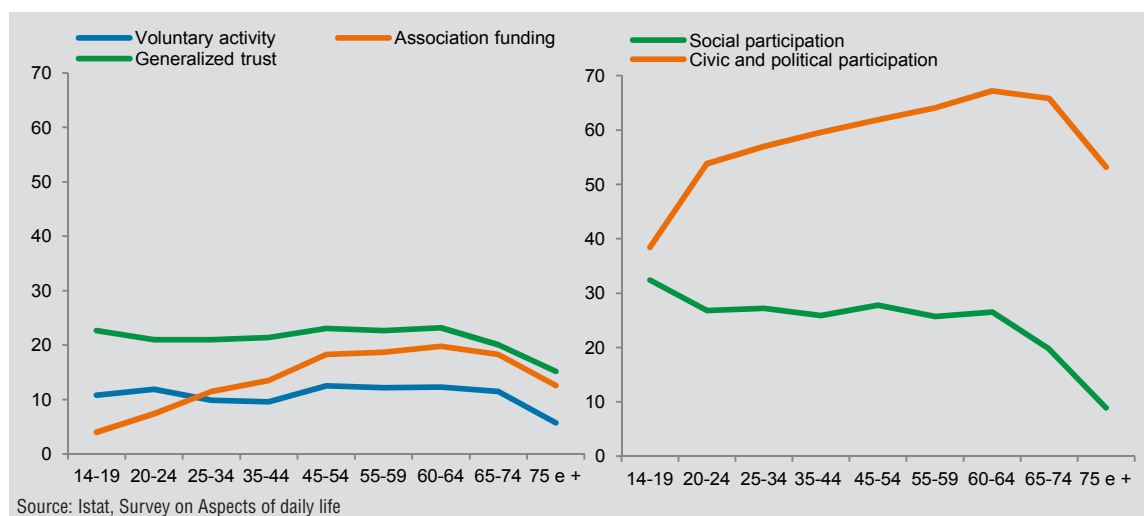
⁴ Istat, Rapporto Annuale 2018. La situazione nel Paese, Roma, Istat, 2018, pp. 289-290.

Social participation is higher among young people aged 14-19 (32.4%) and remains above the average up to 64 years of age, to reach the lowest value among the population aged 75 and over (8.9%).

Civic and political participation, on the other hand, reaches its peak in the middle ages, between 45 and 74 years of age (over 60%), while it is lower in the 14-24 age group and among the population aged 75 and over. (Figure 4).

Civic and political participation reaches its maximum between 45 and 74 years of age (over 60%), while it is lower in the 14-24 age group and among the population aged 75 and over (Figure 4).

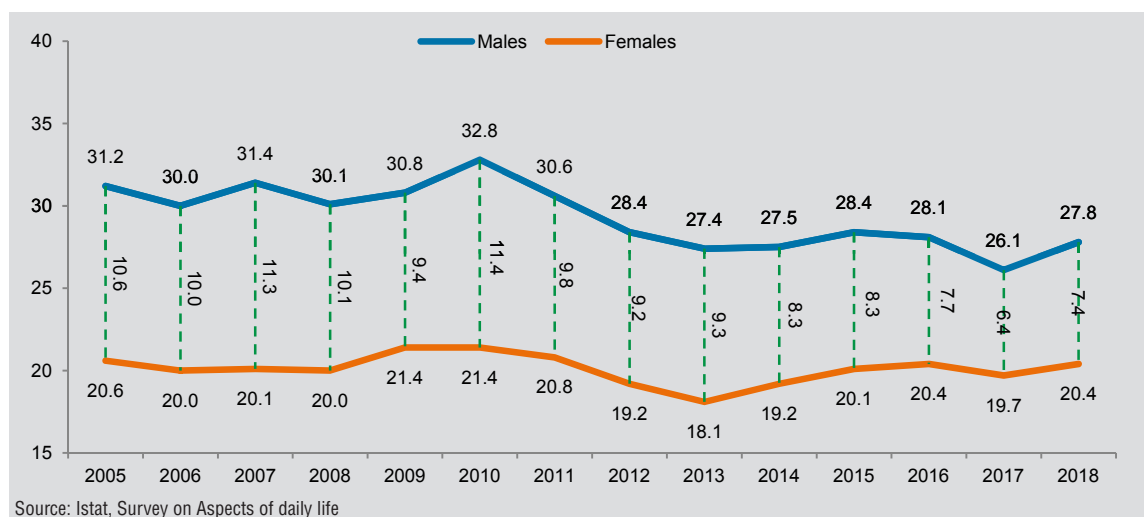
Figure 4. Social relationships indicators by age group. Year 2018. Percentage values



Social, civic and political participation is higher among men

Both for social participation and for civic and political participation, there are also strong gender differences in favour of men. The gender gap is greater and constant over time for civic and political participation (13.9 percentage points more for men) while it is more contained and slightly decreased over time for social participation (7.4 points in 2018) (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Persons aged 14 and over that have performed at least one social participation activity in the last 12 months by gender. Years 2005-2018. Percentage values

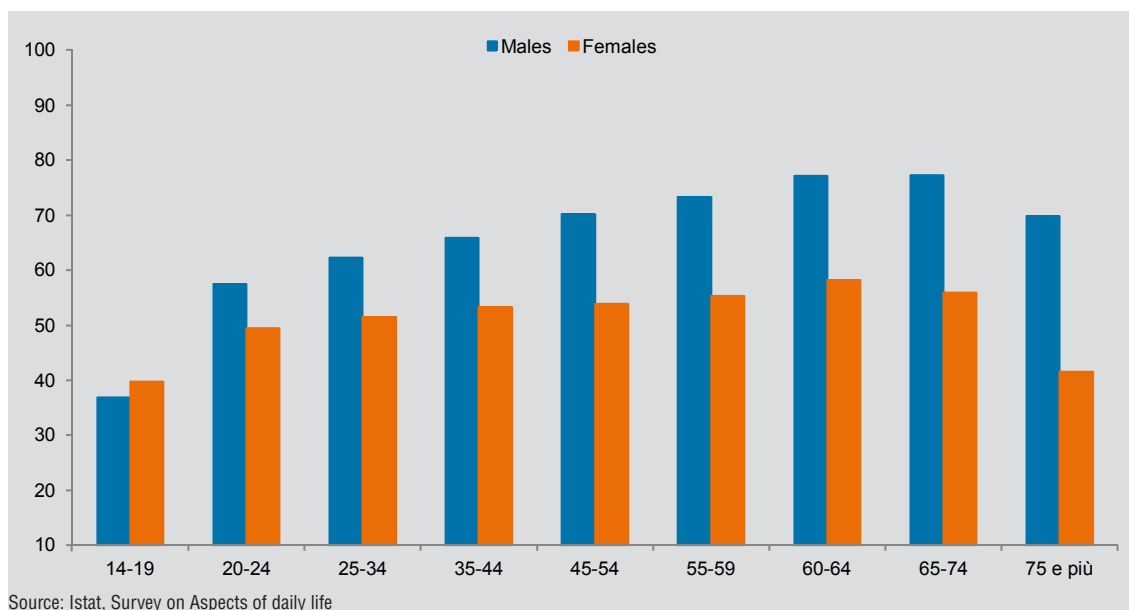


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The gap between men and women is small among young people and grows with increasing age, with greater distances for the older generations.

In particular, for civic and political participation, the gender gap is zero among young people aged 14-19, it is 8-12 percentage points in favour of men in the 20-44 age group and it exceeds 28 percentage points in the population aged 75 years and older (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Persons aged 14 and over who perform at least one of the activities of civic and political participation by gender and age group. Year 2018. Percentage values



Significant differences by educational level

The analysis of the indicators' domain for which it is possible to analyse the differences by educational level shows a positive impact of the level of education on social relations.

In fact, all the indicators of the domain show more positive values among those with the highest levels of education.

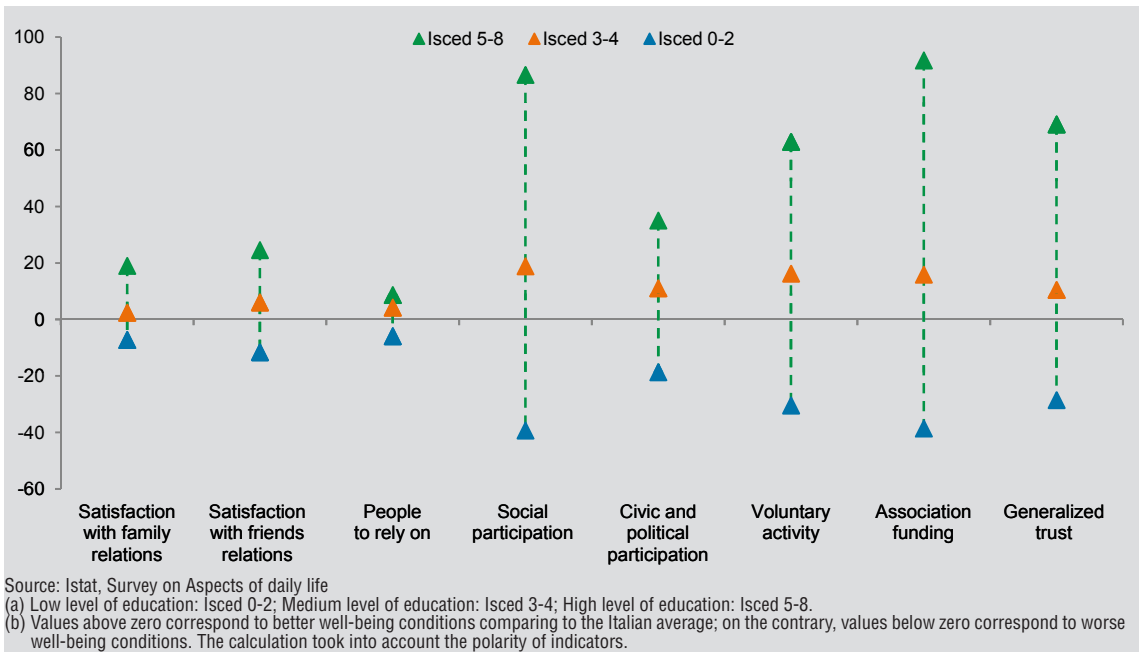
In particular, the indicator that differs most by level of education is social participation: the share of the most educated active people exceeds 45% (+ 88.8% compared to the average population), a value that is almost 4 times higher than that found among the least educated population.

Also voluntary activity is more widespread among people with high educational level, reaching a value (17.2%) is almost 60% more than the average.

People with a high level of education also express greater generalized trust: almost 36% feel that most people are worthy of trust, a value that is 66% higher than the average population.

Less marked differences are found with respect to satisfaction with family relationships and the possibility to have people to rely on (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Percentage variation for Social relationships indicators comparing to the value for Italy by level of education. Latest available year (a) (b)

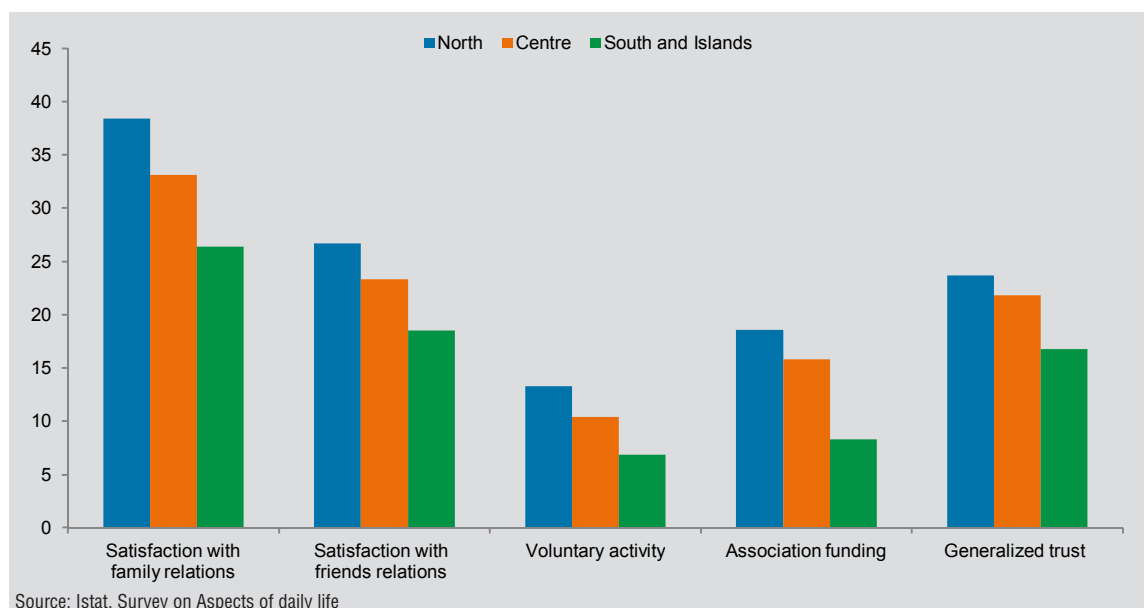


The disadvantage of the South and Islands is confirmed

For all the indicators, the territorial differences are particularly marked and the area of the South and Islands is more disadvantaged.

Satisfaction with friends' relations, which in the South and Islands is 18.5%, in the North is almost 27%. The gap is wider for satisfaction with family relations: 26.4% in the South and Islands, while it exceeds 38% in the North. Furthermore, in the South and Islands there is a lower share of the population that have relatives, friends or neighbours they can rely on.

Figure 8. Social relationships indicators by geographic area. Year 2018. Percentage values



The generalized trust, the association funding and voluntary activity are also lower in the South and Islands, where only 16.8% of the population aged 14 and over feel that most people are worthy of trust (22% in the Centre-North) and the share of the population that have funded associations is 8.3%, compared to 18.6% in the North (Figure 8).

In the Centre-North more than a quarter of the population aged 14 and over have performed at least one social participation activity (excluding volunteering), against 18.6% in the South and Islands.

The territorial differences are wider for civic and political participation, which is 13.6 percentage points higher in the northern regions than in the South and Islands (63.9% compared to 50.3%).

The nonprofit institutions are growing and more widespread in the Centre-North

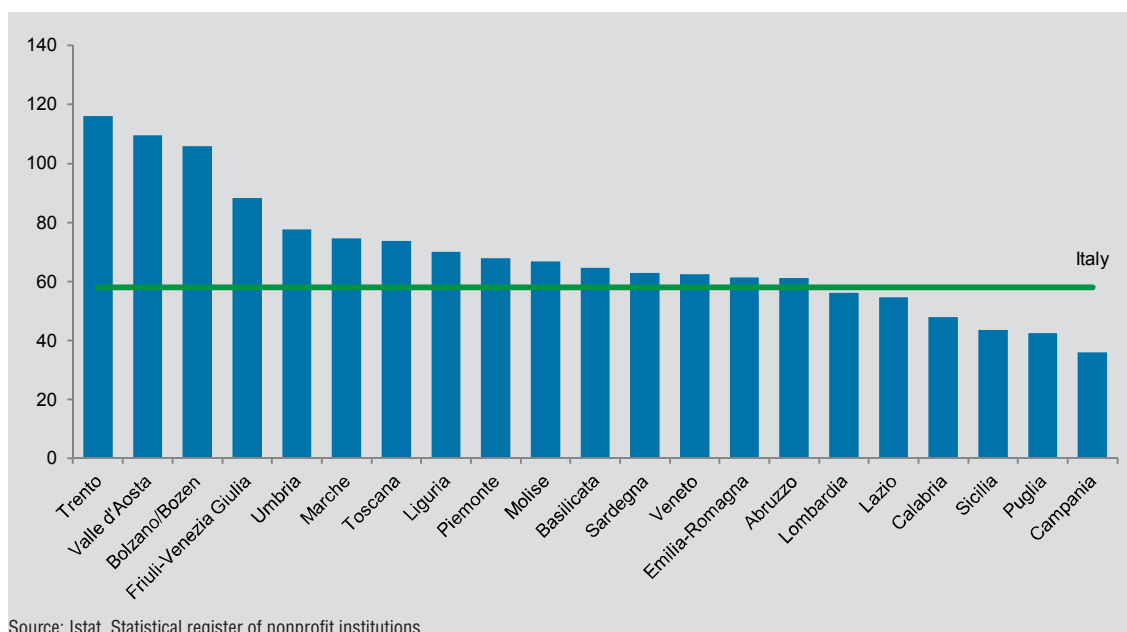
In 2017, there are 350,492 nonprofit institutions active in Italy (57.9 per 10 thousand inhabitants), with a total of 844,775 employees. The sector is growing compared to 2016: institutions increased by 2.1% and employees by 3.9%.

In the Centre-North, there are 64 nonprofit institutions per 10 thousand inhabitants (over 109 in the province of Trento and in Valle d’Aosta), in the South there are 45.2 institutions per 10 thousand inhabitants (the lowest value in Campania: 36 nonprofit institutions per 10,000 inhabitants, Figure 9).

In 2017, the regions with more employees than the national value (140 per 10 thousand inhabitants) are the province of Trento (244 employees per 10 thousand inhabitants), Lombardia (189), Lazio (188), the province of Bolzano (178) and Emilia-Romagna (176 employees per 10 thousand inhabitants).

The culture, sport and recreation sector brings together almost two thirds of the nonprofit institutions in Italy in 2017 (64.5%), followed by the sectors of social services and emergency prevention (9.2%), business and professional associations, trade unions (6.5%), religion (4.8%), education and research (4.0%) and health (3.5%). Over half of the emplo-

Figure 9. Number of nonprofit institutions per 10,000 inhabitants by region. Year 2017



Source: Istat, Statistical register of nonprofit institutions.

ees are concentrated in the social services (36.9%) and health (21.9%) sectors, followed by education and research (14.9%) and development and housing (11.7%).

An indicator useful for measuring the territorial roots of the nonprofit sector is obtained by comparing the number of taxpayers who have made a pre-tax donation to a nonprofit institution without employees on the resident population.

The highest values of the indicator are observed in some northern regions, such as Valle d'Aosta (106.8 compared to 63.5 taxpayers per 1,000 inhabitants of Italy), the provinces of Bolzano (85.1) and Trento (78.9) and Emilia-Romagna (68.4), but also in Umbria (71.1), Puglia (70.1), Basilicata (65.3) and Molise (64.1). The indicator assumes the lowest values in Campania (47.7) and Abruzzo (49.5).

ORIENTATION AND MISSION OF NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS

The Census of nonprofit institutions (last update available 2015) collects useful information to define more accurately the activities that characterize nonprofit institutions. It is possible to distinguish between mutual (institutions that are oriented to the interests and needs of the members only), and public benefit institutions (institutions aimed at the well-being of the community in general). The other relevant element is the mission, that is the purposes that nonprofit institutions pursue.

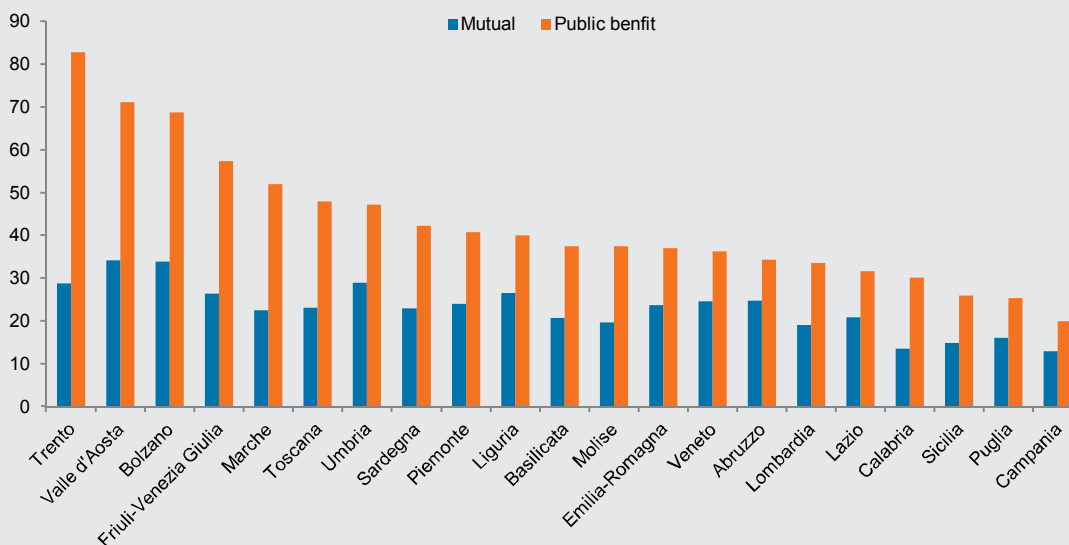
In 2015, nonprofit institutions were of public benefit in 63.3% of cases (213 thousand units) and mutual for the remaining 36.7%. In relation to the present population, every 10,000 inhabitants there are 35 nonprofit institutions of public benefit and 20 mutual nonprofit institutions. Public benefit nonprofit institutions are mostly present in the Northeast (42 institutions per 10 thousand inhabitants) and in the Centre (40 institutions per 10 thousand inhabitants). The most significant presence of public utility institutions is found in the province of Trento (83 institutions per 10 thousand inhabitants), in Valle d'Aosta (71), in the province of Bolzano (69) and in Friuli-Venezia Giulia (57).

Nonprofit institutions are also more widespread in the Northeast (with 25 institutions per 10,000 inhabitants), in the provinces of Trento and Bolzano (respectively 29 and 34 institutions per 10,000 inhabitants) and in Valle d'Aosta (34).

At national level, 34.4% of nonprofit institutions are aimed at supporting people in difficulty (with 19 institutions per 10 thousand inhabitants), 20.4% are for the promotion and protection of rights (11 institutions per 10 thousand inhabitants) and 13.8% for taking care of collective goods (8 institutions per 10,000 inhabitants).

Nonprofit institutions with the aim of supporting people in difficulty are prevalent in the Centre (23 institutions per 10 thousand inhabitants) and in the Northeast (22 institutions per 10 thousand inhabitants). Institutions whose purpose is the promotion and protection of rights are more concentrated in the Centre (14 institutions per 10 thousand inhabitants) while those oriented towards the care of collective assets are more present in the Northeast (10 institutions per 10 thousand inhabitants) and in the Centre (9 institutions per 10,000 inhabitants).

Figure 1. Number of nonprofit institutions per 10,000 inhabitants by region and scope mutual or public benefit. Year 2015



Source: Istat, Census of nonprofit institutions.

Indicators

- 1. Satisfaction with family relations:** Percentage of people aged 14 and over that are very satisfied with family relations on total population aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat, Survey on Aspects of daily life
- 2. Satisfaction with friends relations:** Percentage of people aged 14 and over that are very satisfied with relations with friends on total population aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat, Survey on Aspects of daily life.
- 3. People to rely on:** Percentage of people aged 14 and over that have relatives, friends or neighbors (besides parents, sons, siblings, grandparents, nephews) they can rely on, on total population aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat, Survey on Aspects of daily life
- 4. Social participation:** People aged 14 and over that have performed at least one social participation activity in the last 12 months on total population aged 14 and over. The activities in question are: participation in meetings of associations (cultural/recreational, ecological, civil rights, peace); participation in meetings of trade union organizations, professional or trade associations; meetings of political parties and/or performance of free activities for a party; payment of a monthly or quarterly fee for a sports club.
Source: Istat, Survey on Aspects of daily life
- 5. Civic and political participation:** People aged 14 and over who perform at least one of the activities of civic and political participation on total population aged 14 and over. The activities in question are: The activities in question are: to speak about politics at least once a week; to inform of the facts of Italian politics at least once a week; to attend online consultation or voting on social issues (civic) or political (e.g. urban planning, sign a petition) at least once in the 3 months prior to the interview, to read and to post opinions on social or political issues on the web at least once in the 3 months preceding the interview.
Source: Istat, Survey on Aspects of daily life
- 6. Voluntary activity:** Percentage of people aged 14 and over that have performed free activities for voluntary associations or groups in the last 12 months on total population aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat, Survey on Aspects of daily life
- 7. Association funding:** Percentage of people aged 14 and over that have funded associations in the last 12 months on total population aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat, Survey on Aspects of daily life
- 8. Nonprofit organizations:** Number of nonprofit organizations per 10,000 inhabitants
Source: Statistical register and Census of nonprofit institutions
- 9. Generalized trust:** Percentage of people aged 14 and over that feel that most people are worthy of trust on the total population aged 14 and over.
Source: Istat, Survey on Aspects of daily life

Indicators by region and geographic area

REGIONS AND GEOGRAPHIC AREAS	Satisfaction with family relations (a)	Satisfaction with friends relations (a)	People to rely on (a)	Social participation (a)
	2018	2018	2018	2018
Piemonte	37.3	25.5	82.0	24.9
Valle d'Aosta/Vallée d'Aoste	32.7	25.0	86.3	25.7
Liguria	40.2	27.7	84.3	25.6
Lombardia	38.2	27.0	80.1	26.8
Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol	44.0	32.9	87.7	39.2
<i>Bolzano/Bozen</i>	<i>43.6</i>	<i>33.7</i>	<i>89.3</i>	<i>39.2</i>
<i>Trento</i>	<i>44.3</i>	<i>32.2</i>	<i>86.1</i>	<i>39.1</i>
Veneto	37.5	25.9	81.7	28.1
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	38.2	25.8	82.1	28.5
Emilia-Romagna	39.2	26.8	82.4	28.0
Toscana	37.3	27.0	83.4	27.2
Umbria	37.1	28.3	83.9	26.4
Marche	33.4	23.3	81.0	24.4
Lazio	29.7	20.1	82.6	23.8
Abruzzo	35.7	23.3	81.8	22.4
Molise	27.3	18.6	76.5	19.8
Campania	22.5	16.5	76.6	16.2
Puglia	23.8	17.6	77.8	19.6
Basilicata	31.2	23.1	83.7	26.2
Calabria	26.5	18.9	79.5	17.8
Sicilia	27.9	18.2	77.1	17.3
Sardegna	32.6	22.8	83.6	23.8
North	38.4	26.7	81.7	27.4
Centre	33.1	23.3	82.7	25.2
South and Islands	26.4	18.5	78.3	18.6
Italy	33.2	23.2	80.8	23.9

(a) Per 100 persons aged 14 and over;

(b) Per 10,000 inhabitants.

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Civic and political participation (a)	Voluntary activity (a)	Association funding (a)	Nonprofit organizations (b)	Generalized trust (a)
2018	2018	2018	2017	2018
62.5	11.6	15.9	67.8	21.3
59.8	13.1	18.6	109.5	31.1
67.3	11.3	15.0	70.0	21.5
63.7	13.3	18.5	56.2	23.8
59.6	22.0	29.2	111.0	37.1
57.8	18.9	30.4	105.9	39.7
61.4	25.1	28.1	116.0	34.6
63.2	14.1	18.5	62.4	24.2
62.5	11.9	18.7	88.2	24.8
67.1	13.1	20.3	61.4	22.7
63.6	12.7	20.8	73.7	24.7
62.6	11.8	16.1	77.7	20.5
60.8	9.5	16.0	74.7	22.2
60.5	8.9	12.5	54.7	20.1
59.6	6.6	10.9	61.2	18.1
53.9	6.5	8.9	66.8	15.8
45.5	6.5	7.4	36.0	19.6
53.6	6.8	8.4	42.4	17.4
55.3	10.4	13.9	64.7	14.5
49.3	7.9	8.0	47.9	16.2
46.9	5.3	5.5	43.5	13.3
60.5	11.1	15.9	62.8	17.0
63.9	13.3	18.6	64.5	23.7
61.7	10.4	15.8	64.8	21.8
50.3	6.9	8.3	45.2	16.8
58.8	10.5	14.5	57.9	21.0