



Back inTown

ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS AND POLICY MAKERS IN DEVELOPING, IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING YOUTH-ORIENTED POLICIES

ITALY - REPORT

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POLITECNICO DI MILANO

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This Report is organized in two parts. The first describes the national system of youth policies (institutional and governance structure, actors and policy tools). The second part of this work will analyse the role of social partners and policy makers in developing, implementing and monitoring youth-oriented policies in four Italian cities: Verona, Lecce, Taranto and Latina.

Each city will be analysed through a brief general presentation, a collection of maps and data that analyse some socio-economical potentialities and/or criticalities, and after that the local youth policy subsystem and the policy case studies selected will be discussed.

Collection of maps

Concerning the collection of maps, they have been elaborated from a 2021 ISTAT dataset (Italian national statistical institute) with data divided by census sections that allow to highlight socio-spatial dissimilarities in the cities analysed (ISTAT, 2024b).

The theme of the maps elaborated are young people, foreign background people, foreign people segregation, school drop-outs and occupation. The elaboration have been produced as follows:

Young people: the map analyses the density of residents in the 15-34 years old range per square kilometre .

Young people's change in time: the map analyses the change in the 15-34 years old population between 2021 and 2001 in each census section.

Foreign background people: the map analyses the density of foreign and stateless residents per square kilometre.

Foreign people segregation: the map analyses the number of foreign and stateless residents per census sections multiplied by the percentage of foreign people in the overall residents of the census section.

School drop-outs: the map analyses the percentage of residents with more than 9 years that have not graduated from second grade secondary schools in the overall residents of the census section. The inclusion of children and adolescents (9-18 years old) in the analysis was due to the way data were aggregated

in the ISTAT dataset, that do not allow to divide the population in different age ranges when analysing the education levels. Nevertheless, the elaboration allow to draw significant considerations about the spatial dissimilarities in the cities analysed.

Occupation: the map analyses the percentage of occupied people in the 15-64 years old residents of the census section.

Youth policy subsystem and case studies

This section will analyse the role of institutional actors, non-institutional actors and trade unions in the implementation and design of youth policies.

The case study discussion will analyse the contents of the policies, their goals and the policy instruments used to implement, the results that were expected in the design phase and the achieved results, the policy network, the actors and the interactions that were established in the policy making process.

Methodological notes on statistical indicators

* Young-age dependency ratio: retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Young-age_dependency_ratio

** Old -age dependency ratio: retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Old-age_dependency_ratio

NEET: young people neither in employment nor in education and training
DROPOUTS: early leavers from education and training; retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Early_leaver_from_education_and_training#:~:text=For%20Eurostat%20statistical%20purposes%2C%20an,at%20most%20lower%20secondary%20education.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE FOR YOUTH POLICIES

National framework

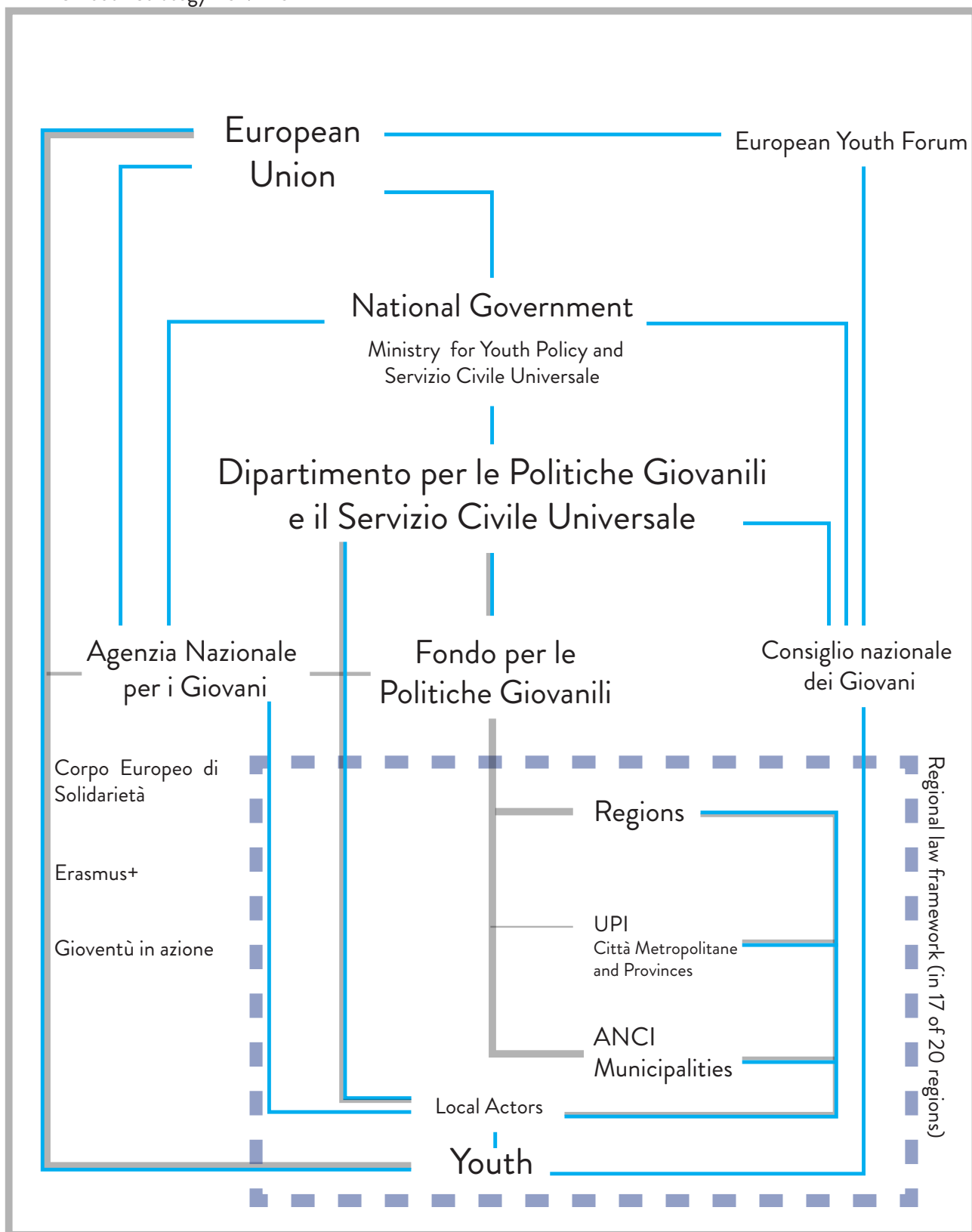
In Italy, there is no univocal legal definition of “youth”. Generally, it refers to individuals over fourteen years old, with the upper age limit varying depending on the specific law or issue addressed (Dipartimento per le Politiche Giovanili e il Servizio Civile Universale, n.d.a). According to Art. 31 of the Italian Constitution, the Republic protects young people by “promoting the institutions necessary for this purpose”. While Art. 117 of the Italian Constitution grants legislative authority over youth-related policies equally to the National government, the Regions and Autonomous Provinces.




At the national level, a draft law on youth has been under discussion for several years. The 2023 Nota di Aggiornamento del Documento di Economia e Finanza 2023 (Update Note to the Economic and Financial Document) (Ministero dell’Economia e della Finanza, 2023), which outlines the baseline scenario based on current legislation and the public finance objectives for 2024-2026, includes provisions for a new law on youth and universal civil service (“Disposizioni in materia di giovani e servizio civile universale e deleghe al Governo per il riordino della materia”), which was supposed to be drafted in 2024. Although specific details are not yet available, the new law is expected to address issues such as youth checks and youth work (Dipartimento per le Politiche Giovanili e il Servizio Civile Universale, n.d.b).

Out of Italy’s twenty regions, seventeen have established regional laws on youth policies. The regions still lacking a framework law are Molise, Calabria, and Abruzzo (Ibid.).

Each year, the “National Youth Strategy” is agreed upon within the framework of the Unified Conference, which brings together the national government, regions, autonomous provinces, the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), and the Union of Italian Provinces (UPI). The strategy defines the principle and the initiatives in favour of young people to pursue. No youth representative is involved in the conference (Dipartimento per le Politiche Giovanili e il Servizio Civile Universale, 2024).

The following scheme resumes how youth policies are elaborated, supported and realised, trying to clarify which are the main actors involved, their relationship and the law framework they work in.

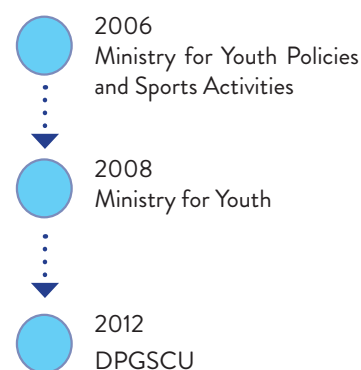


-  Legal framework
-  Interaction
-  Funding

Main actors

Dipartimento per le Politiche Giovanili e il Servizio Civile Universale (DPGSCU)

Italian Youth Policy Department supports the Minister for Sports and Youth in promoting and coordinating government actions to implement policies for youth and the Servizio Civile Universale (Italian Youth Work) (Dipartimento per le Politiche Giovanili e il Servizio Civile Universale, n.d.). The target group for actions by the DPGSCU ranges from 14 to 28/35 years old, depending on the specific measures adopted. For instance, the National Youth Strategy targets the 14-35 age group; the National Youth Card is available for those aged 18 to 35; and the Universal Civil Service is aimed at individuals aged 18 to 28.



Agenzia Nazionale per i Giovani

Agenzia Nazionale per i Giovani is a government agency, established in 2007, with full autonomy over organizational, management, economic, and financial matters. It promotes youth policy programs that typically focus on fostering active citizenship and integrating Italian youth into the European youth system, supporting the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 in Italy. The agency manages programs such as Erasmus+ and Gioventù in Azione. Like other national agencies, it facilitates information exchanges, informal groups, and associations, selects public agency projects for funding, and collaborates with other national and European agencies. It provides young people aged 13 to 30 with opportunities for mobility, cultural and professional education, volunteering, and exchanges (Agenzia Nazionale per i Giovani, n.d.a).



Consiglio Nazionale dei Giovani

Consiglio Nazionale dei Giovani (CNG) is a consultative body representing youth in interactions with institutions and consultations on youth policies. Its primary interlocutor is the Youth Policy Department. The CNG is also a member of the European Youth Forum, advocating for European youth interests to international institutions. The CNG can directly engage with the President of the Council of Ministers or the Minister of Public Youth, express opinions and proposals on youth policies, conduct studies and reports, and promote active citizenship among young people. It also encourages the establishment of local youth consultative agencies, supports youth-oriented projects, and fosters networking activities among youth organizations (Consiglio Nazionale dei Giovani, n.d.a).



CNG is provided of a president, a presidential council, a general assembly, a secretariat, several thematic commissions a Board of Guarantors, a Board of Auditors, several thematic working groups and a Secretarial Office (Ibid.). The National Youth Council can rely on the support of over 80 associations to collaborate with public administrations (Consiglio Nazionale dei Giovani, n.d.a).

Fondo per le Politiche Giovanili

Since 2006, youth policies have been primarily funded by the Youth Policy Fund, established by Article 19, paragraph 2, of Decree Law 223/2006, converted with amendments into Law 248/2006. The Fund aims to promote young people's right to cultural and professional education and integration into social life, including the realization of their right to housing and facilitating access to credit for purchasing and using goods and services.

The Fund is financed annually through the state budget. In 2023, the state budget law no. 197/2022 allocated approximately €85.9 million to the Youth Policy Fund for national, regional, and local initiatives. In 2022, the state budget law no. 234/2021 had allocated about €90.864 million to the Fund, including €5 million for national activities within the framework of the European Year of Youth.

The National Fund for Universal Civil Service finances civil service interventions based on annual programming approved by its advisory body (the National Council) and the State-Regions Conference, operating under special accounting as provided by current legislation. In 2023, the Fund amounted to €111,581,036, supplemented by €216,000,000 from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) (Dipartimento per le Politiche Giovanili e il Servizio Civile Universale, n.d.d).

Main national policies funded

By the time this report is being written the main policies that are being funded are the following (Dipartimento per le Politiche Giovanili e il Servizio Civile Universale, n.d.d).

Spazi Civici di Comunità (Civic community spaces)

With a total budget of €10 million, this program aims to promote national-level sports and social activities. It funds projects led by associations and amateur sports clubs in collaboration with public entities (such as municipalities, universities, schools, etc.) and Third Sector organizations, supporting the creation of spaces dedicated to sports and social activities. The initiative targets young people aged 14-34, particularly those with fewer opportunities.

Giovani in Biblioteca (Youth in Libraries)

This initiative promotes the development of gathering spaces within libraries aimed at younger generations to foster recreational, social, educational, cultural, and developmental activities, encouraging proper use of leisure time. Implemented in collaboration with local authorities, universities, and youth organizations, the beneficiaries are young people aged 14-35. The initiative is allocated a budget of €12 million.

Giovani 2030. (2024). Giovani in biblioteca project in Saluzzo, Piedmont.



GIOVANI2030 Web Platform

Launched in 2021, this platform provides news and insights on volunteering, training, education, culture, entertainment, and sports.

Carta Giovani Nazionale (CGN) - (National Youth Card)

Since March 2021, the CGN offers benefits for accessing goods, services, and opportunities both nationally and across Europe. The card is linked to the European Youth Card managed by the European Youth Card Association (EYCA), to which the DPGSCU has subscribed.

Fondo per il credito ai giovani (Youth Credit Fund)

The Youth Credit Fund (or “Study Fund”) enables deserving young individuals, lacking sufficient financial means, to pursue further education after high school.

This includes enrolling in university, post-graduate specialization courses, or deepening language proficiency through a loan guaranteed by the State (up to a maximum of €25,000).

Bonus Cultura (Culture Bonus)

Bonus Cultura is a €500 voucher for cultural spending granted to new eighteen-year-olds. Established since 2016, this bonus allows the purchase of various goods and services, from books to tickets for concerts, exhibitions, museums, cultural events, and more.

Bonus Affitti (Rent Bonus)

Rent bonus for individuals aged 20 to 31, this incentive applies to those who enter into a lease agreement for an entire property or a portion of it to be used as their main residence. For the first four years, the bonus allows a deduction from the gross tax equal to 20% of the rental amount, up to a maximum limit of €2,000.

Mutuo Agevolato (Facilitated Mortgage)

Facilitated Mortgage is available for individuals under 36 purchasing a house. This measure includes exemptions from various fees such as registration, mortgage, and cadastral taxes. Additionally, there's the opportunity to obtain a mortgage under better conditions with the possibility of the State acting as a guarantor, in the case the individual defaults.

Youth work and other policies

At the local level, the Youth Policy Fund supports projects implemented by Regions, the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), the UPI, and other institutional actors, including the Italian Youth Agency and the National Youth Council.

The National Fund for Universal Civil Service has financed the participation of young people aged 18 to 29 in the national volunteer program. In 2023, funding was available for 51,600 volunteers, with 50,600 in Italy and 1,000 abroad.

Concluded national policies

In order to have a more complete overview of national efforts in tackling youth needs in recent years the next section will analyse some concluded policies that have been supported in the last fifteen years.

National Social Policy 2021-2023 - PIPPI Program (Institutionalization Prevention Intervention Program)

40% of funds were allocated to initiatives focused on children and adolescents, particularly addressing issues like early school leaving. Collaboration with public institutions, schools, and parents ensured the welfare of children.

The PIPPI program, initiated in 2010, aimed at mitigating the risk of mistreatment and preventing the removal of children and adolescents from their households. It provided personalized pathways for social intervention to address inequalities stemming from neglect within families, thereby counteracting negative impacts on social and educational development (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche sociali, 2021).

First Home Mortgage Guarantee Fund, 2013

Aimed to support young people in purchasing their first homes, offering guarantees up to EUR 250,000 (CONSAP, 2024).

Care Leavers Project

Empowered young individuals transitioning out of residential communities or foster care homes upon turning 18. Provided assistance for them to pursue secondary education, university studies, vocational training programs, or enter the workforce (PON Inclusion, 2022).

Youth for the Social, 2018

Aimed at employability, activation, integration, and youth inclusion. Promoted social inclusion and personal growth. Funded through the Action and Cohesion Plan (PAC) in the country's less developed regions (Calabria, Campania, Apulia, Sicily, Basilicata).

Paths for the Training, Work, and Integration of Young Migrants, 2016

Aimed at the social and working inclusion of UFM's after exiting the reception systems. Funded integration

paths through internships and integrated services. Funded by resources from the European Social Fund-PON inclusion (DPGSCU,2024).

National Operational Programme for Schools- Skills & Learning Environment 2014-2020

Aimed to combat the issue of early school leavers. Financed 1,600 projects to combat factors related to school drop-outs in the area of social inclusion and combating hardship in particularly disadvantaged areas. 1,273 projects regarded social integration and reception to specifically counter school dropout. (MIUR, 2017).

Intervention Plan for Reducing Territorial Gaps in Education, 2020

Aimed to improve learning outcomes in lesser developed regions of Calabria, Campania, Puglia, Sardegna, and Sicilia. (Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito, 2020).

Fuoriclasse Program

The Fuoriclasse project by Save the Children Italy aims to combat school dropout rates through integrated interventions targeting students, teachers, and families. Active since 2011, it includes motivational workshops, school camps, and educational support in and out of school. The initiative has expanded to multiple cities, providing scholarships and fostering inclusive education. It also established the Fuoriclasse in Movimento network to spread its methodologies. The project benefited thousands of students, teachers, and parents, continuing to promote educational success and prevent school abandonment. (Save the Children, n.d.).

Plan against Education Poverty

Aimed to intervene effectively and systematically in combating educational failures. Funded by resources from the Poverty Fund (Camera dei Deputati, 2022).

Trade union efforts

Among the several associations and organisations that collaborate with the CNG we also find some of the main trade unions in Italy such as CISL, UIL, UGL, Coldiretti, LINK, ACLI, Confartigianato, Federazione dei Professionisti, Alleanza delle Cooperative Italiane, FABI, FUCI, FERNARGIFAR, ACAI, FNOVI, CONFEURO, Assopetroli-Assoenergia (Consiglio Nazionale dei Giovani, n.d.b).

The main trade unions in Italy tend to promote youth policies through local actions carried out by local or regional branches. For example CGIL Matera opened a consultancy office dedicated to young people (CGIL Basilicata, n.d.).

CISL and UIL opened several regional branches specifically dedicated to young people, such as Giovani CISL Campania or UIL Giovani Emilia Romagna and Bologna that provides support in professional training and services, promotes open discussions, and aims to analyse and propose solutions for contemporary youth labour market challenges (UIL Emilia Romagna, 2017).

VERONA

Verona is an Italian municipality with 255,810 inhabitants, and the capital of the province of the same name in the Veneto region. It is the most populous municipality in the region, located at the northern edge of the Po Valley, along the Adige River, and at the foothills of the Lessini Mountains.

Verona's economy is highly diversified, with businesses evenly distributed across agriculture, industry, construction, tourism, commerce, and services, achieving leadership in several sectors. It is Italy's top province for the export of wine and fruits and vegetables. The manufacturing sector is particularly strong in food production, machinery, thermomechanics, marble extraction and processing, and fashion. Tourism is also significant. The city is renowned for its rich heritage, stunning architecture, and association with Shakespeare's iconic love story, "Romeo and Juliet".

Verona's strategically favourable location has made it a key hub for road, rail, and air transport, leading to the development of Quadrante Europa, one of Europe's most important inter-modal transport centers. This positioning has strengthened Verona's role in international economic and cultural exchanges. While Verona's economy is largely composed of small and medium-sized enterprises, it is also home to several major companies.

Verona is known for its strong educational and cultural institutions. The University of Verona attracts a large number of students, both local and international, fostering a youthful and dynamic atmosphere. Cultural life in Verona is vibrant, with numerous theaters, museums, galleries, and events. The famous Arena di Verona is one of the main stages in Italy for cultural events, concerts and live shows.

As it will be discussed in the next pages, addressing youth unemployment and creating opportunities for young people remain priorities for the city, with initiatives focused on supporting entrepreneurship, vocational training, and cultural activities.

*On the right:
Tekin, Ogeday (2022). Sun Setting Over the Adige River
Flowing Through Verona City*



Statistical Indicators

Description of the indicator	2007	2011	2015	2019	Last year available	Territorial level	Type	Note
Tot. Population	264.191	264.161	258.765	259.785	257.225	City	Absolute numbers	Last date (31-3-2024)
Youth population (15-24)	23.452	24.136	23.837	24.151	24.047	City	Absolute numbers	Last year 2023
Youth population (25-29)	15.025	14.138	13.361	13.960	13.974	City	Absolute numbers	Last year 2023
Youth population (30-34)	19.029	16.163	14.536	14.759	15.265	City	Absolute numbers	Last year 2023
Young-age dependency ratio (pop 15< over 15-64 population)*	19,99%	20,37%	20,44%	19,63%	18,28%	City	Ratio *	Last year 2023
Old-age dependency ratio (pop 64+ over 15-64 population)**	35,17%	37,39%	40,29%	40,71%	41,48%	City	Ratio **	Last year 2023
% of foreigners on the total population	11,72%	14,37%	14,11%	14,78%	15,09%	City	%	Last year 2023
% of foreigners on youth population	22,13%	25,63%	22,44%	20,45%	18,46%	City	%	Last year 2023
% of people with tertiary education		16,27%		20,14%	22,67%	City	%	Last year 2022
% of youth with tertiary education (25-39 years)					33% (2022)	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2022
% of employed people (15-64)	66,50%	66,50%	64,4	69,80%	71,9% (2023)	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of employed youth 15-24 years old	36,6%	23,80%	19,60%	26,70%	25,50%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of employed youth 25-34 years old	81,60%	80,00%	72,30%	75,10%	81,2% (2023)	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of unemployed people (15-74)	3,30%	4,40%	5,40%	4,6%	3,0% (2023)	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of unemployed youth 15-24 years old	5,20%	22,30%	23,50%	15,30%	13,80%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of unemployed youth 25-34 years old	4,60%	5,20%	9,00%	6,10%	3,80%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% NEET among youth		7,70%		11,70%	13,70%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2022
% of school drop-outs among youth	13,1%	16,5%	8,1%	8,40%	10,50%	Region (NUTS 2)	%	Last year 2020
GDP per person	28.001,6	27.988,3	28.641,1	31.187,9	31.535,7	Province (NUTS 3)	Currency	Last year 2021
Average income per household	90.731,8 (2008)	91.316,8	88.606,2	95.857,5	101.612,3	Region (NUTS 2)	Currency	Last year 2022
Housing market price per sq	3.150,00	3.200,00	2.950,00	3.050,00	3.300,00	Province (NUTS 3)	Currency	Last year 2023

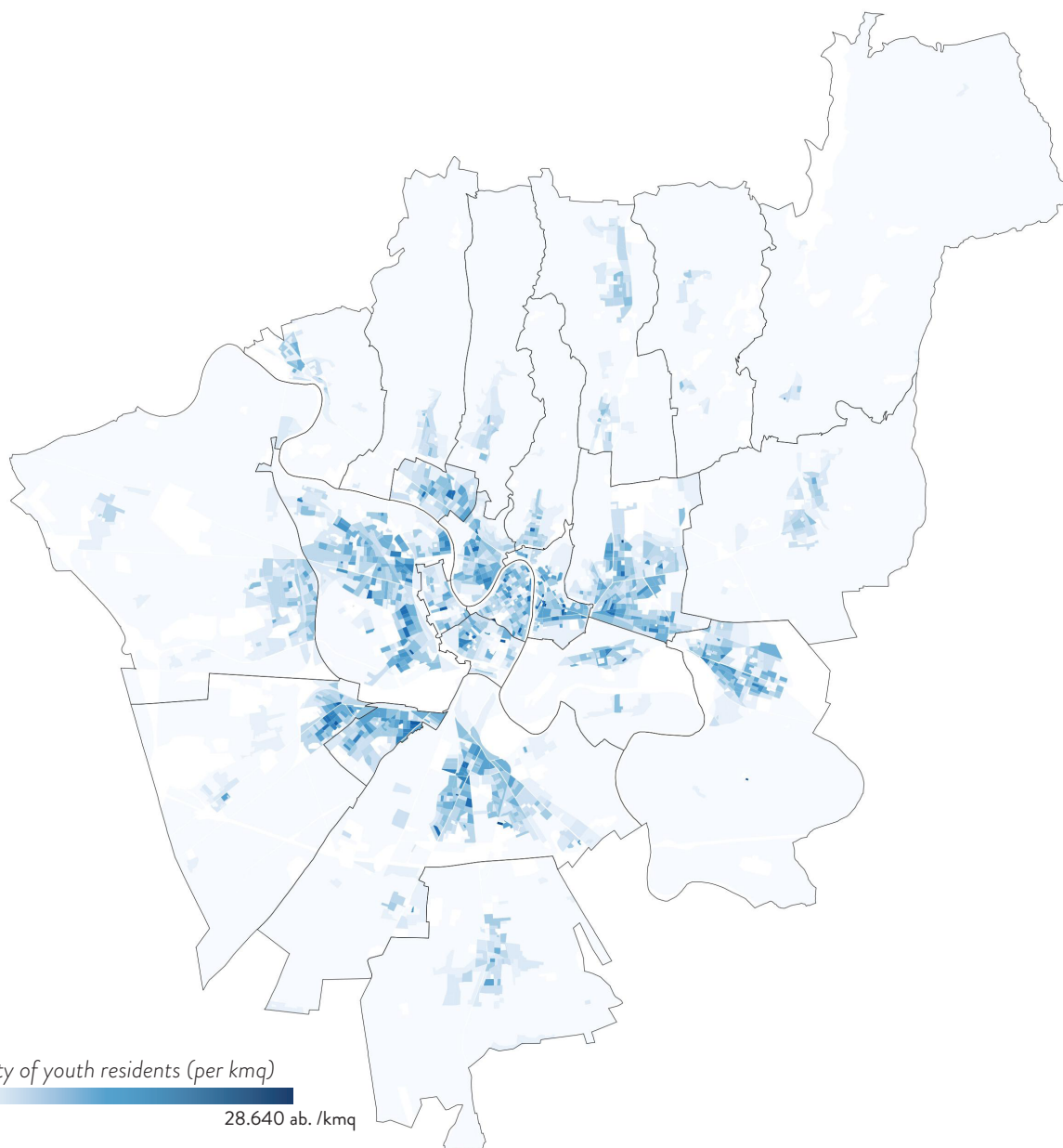
Description of the indicator	2007	2011	2015	2019	Last year available	Territorial level	Type	Note
Distribution of employment by sector:				2020		Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2021
- Agriculture/mining (primary)			4,70%	4,30%	5,28%			
- Construction			6,21%	6,05%	6,10%			
- Manufacturing			19,22%	19,81%	18,55%			
- Services			69,87%	69,84%	70,07%			
Available beds for tourists in the City	10.014	10.893	13.316	24.936	25.222	City	Number	Last year 2023
Universities in the City	3	3	3	3	3	City	Number	
Post-secondary non-tertiary centres						City	Number	
Secondary / Upper secondary schools			83	86	82	City	Number	Last year 2024
Unemployment benefits received by people looking for work					19.247	Province (NUTS 3)	Number of beneficiaries	Last year 2023
Activation/support measures received by people looking for work						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Incentives for Start-Up and/or support for self-employment						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Rent benefits for youth						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Living benefits for youth						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Social housing units				1.819	1.734	City	Number	Last year 2023
Social housing units			5.129	5.026	5.103	Province (NUTS 3)	Number	Last year 2023
Take-up rates of children 0-2 in Early Childhood Education and Care Services			38,5% (2016)	43% (2020)	47%	City	Rates	Last year 2022
Average age of leaving the parental home			29,85	30,10	26,35	Country	Age	Last year 2022
Average age of having the first child	29,92	30,38	30,67	31,26	31,85	Province (NUTS 3)	Age	Last year 2023
Total public expenditure on education	4,40%	4,10%	4,00%	3,90%	4,10%	Country	% of GDP	Last year 2021
Expenditure in active labour market policies		0,31%	0,42%	0,21%	0,22%	Country	% of GDP	Last year 2020
Expenditure in start-up incentives						Country	% of GDP	
Expenditure in youth policies	0,01%	0,001%	0,0003%	0,002%	0,003%	Country	% of GDP	Last year 2023

Young people

Young people in Verona make up the 20.7% of the inhabitants (ISTAT, 2023).

The overall resident population of the city (257.225 in 2023), has slightly decreased by 7.000 units since 2007 and also the proportion of young people in the resident population decreased (-1% since 2007) (Tuttitalia, n.d.a). Almost 3 out of 5 people that left the city in these years are young people between 15 and 34 years of age. Especially in the 30-34 years section, the city lost 3700 residents (Ibid.).

As it will be shown later city youth population shrinkage is a phenomena that affect all the cities analysed in this report. This trend is not always matched at province level, where in the last five years young population has grown by 1.2%.

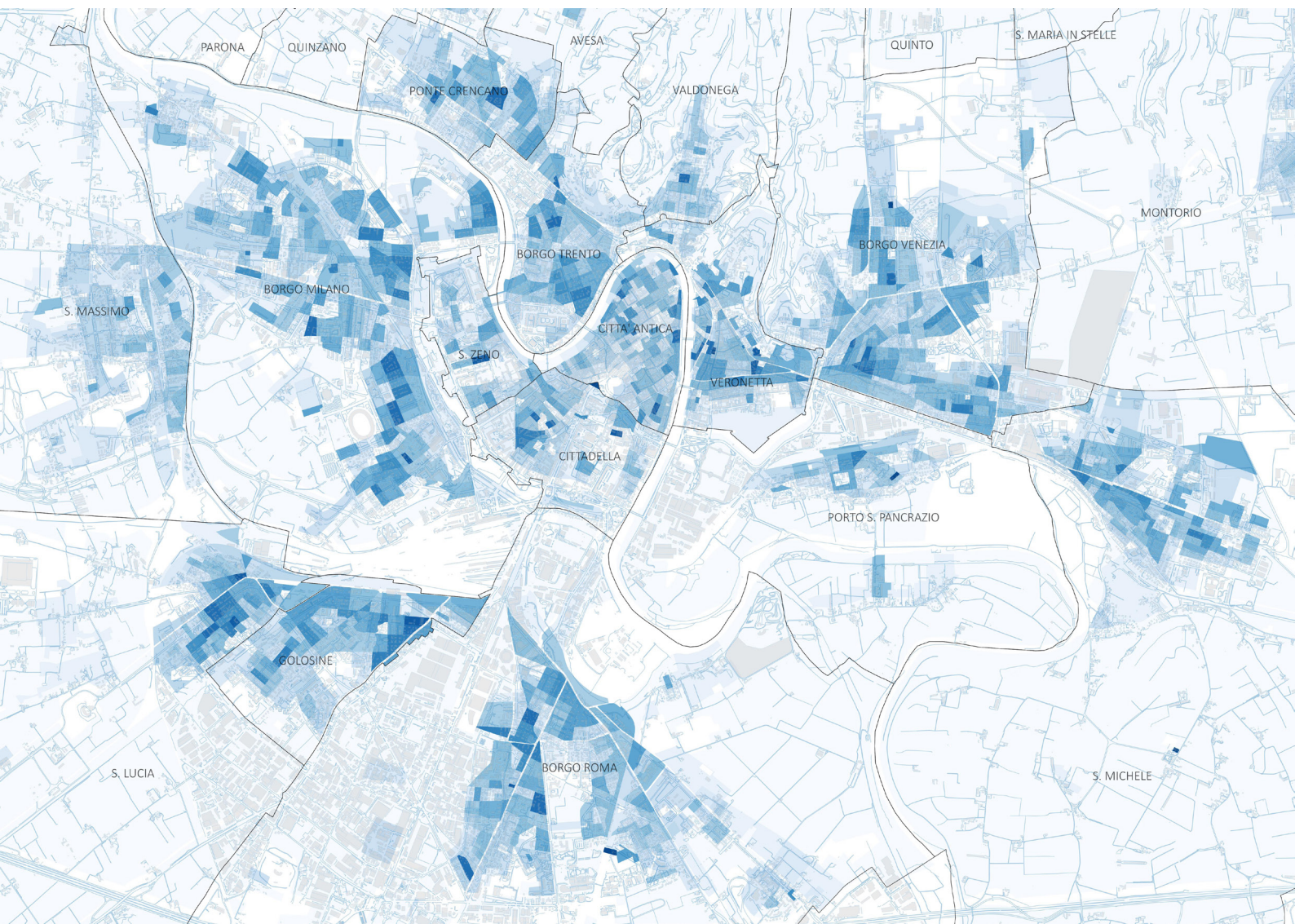


In Verona youth population is quite homogeneously distributed in most of the urban center neighbourhoods and is lower in the external fractions.

According to the elaboration of Il Sole 24 Ore on different parameters that affect the quality of life of young people, Verona is one of the best provinces in Italy for youth (17th out of 107 provinces) (Il Sole 24 Ore, 2024a).

In particular the province distinguished itself thanks to the high number of young university graduates (33% of all youth), a low youth unemployment (6.2%), a high rate of stabilized precarious contracts, high rate of marriages and presence of sport facilities and a low rate of NEETS between young people (13,7%, 33rd out of 107 provinces).

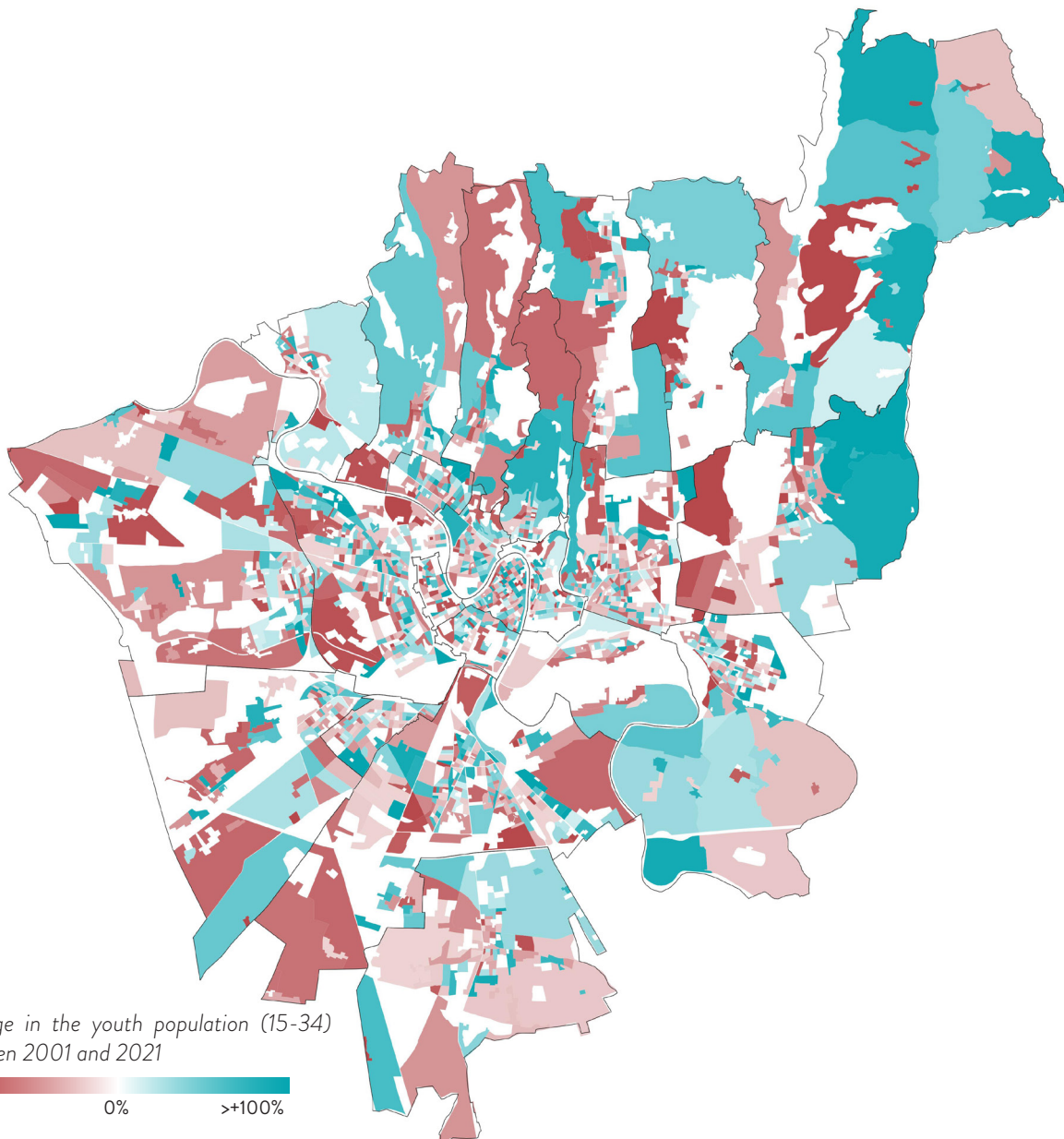
On the other hand rents in semi central areas are quite high and take up to 27,6% of the medium salary (81 out of 107 provinces). Furthermore, the age to have a first child is higher than national average (32,8 years) and there is a low rate of young people in public administration (24,5%).



Young people's change in time

As we said before, Almost 3 out of 5 people that left the city in these years are young people between 15 and 34 years of age. The 30-34 age range went down significantly.

From the cross analysis of the population in 2021 and 2001, we can understand how the exodus of young people was distributed in the territory. Golosine neighbourhood lost a significant number of youth, so did many areas in the west of Borgo Milano, in Borgo Venezia, in Porto S. Pancrazio, Ca' di David, many areas in Quinto and the semi-rural areas in S.Massimo.



Considering Verona has been in the top 10 of the best provinces for quality of life in Italy, several times in the last years (IISole24Ore, 2023), we might say that its capacity to attract youth is still lower than the rate of youth leaving, both for internal migration toward other cities and external migration abroad. It must be noted that in the last survey “Quality of life in European cities” elaborated by the European Commission, 34% of the interviewed Veroneses stated that the quality of life is decreasing in the city (only 18,8% stated the opposite)(ISTAT,2024b). Nonetheless, the fact that even one of the most attractive territories in Italy is losing young people, might highlight some systemic youth questions at national level that do not spare Verona.



Foreign background people

Foreign population of Verona has increased by 15.000 units since 2007, going from a 11.7% to a 15.09% of the overall population. This makes Verona the most multicultural city among the ones analysed in this report.

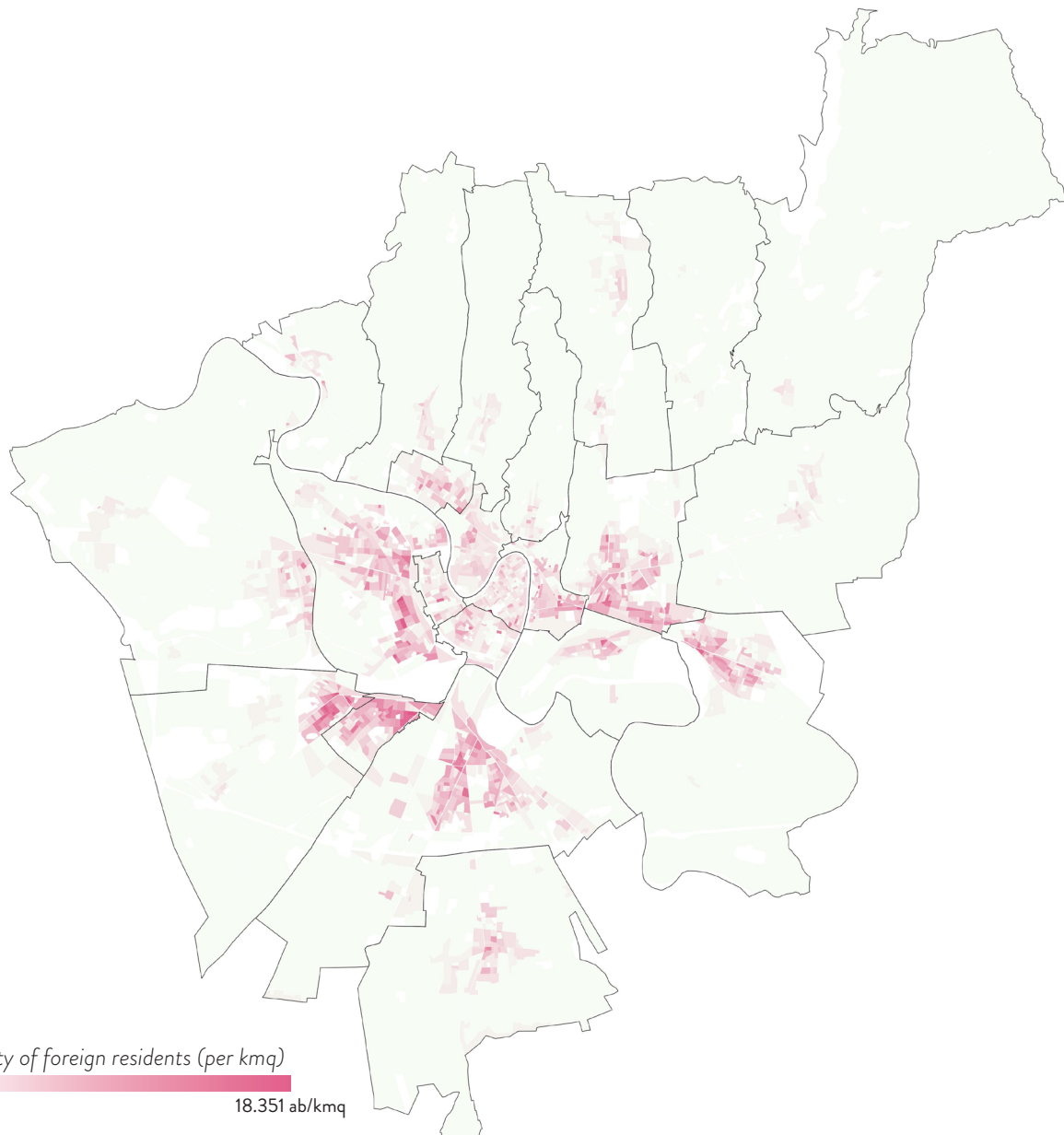
The percentage of foreign people on the overall population is higher than national (8,7%) and regional average (10,3%) (ISTAT, 2024a).

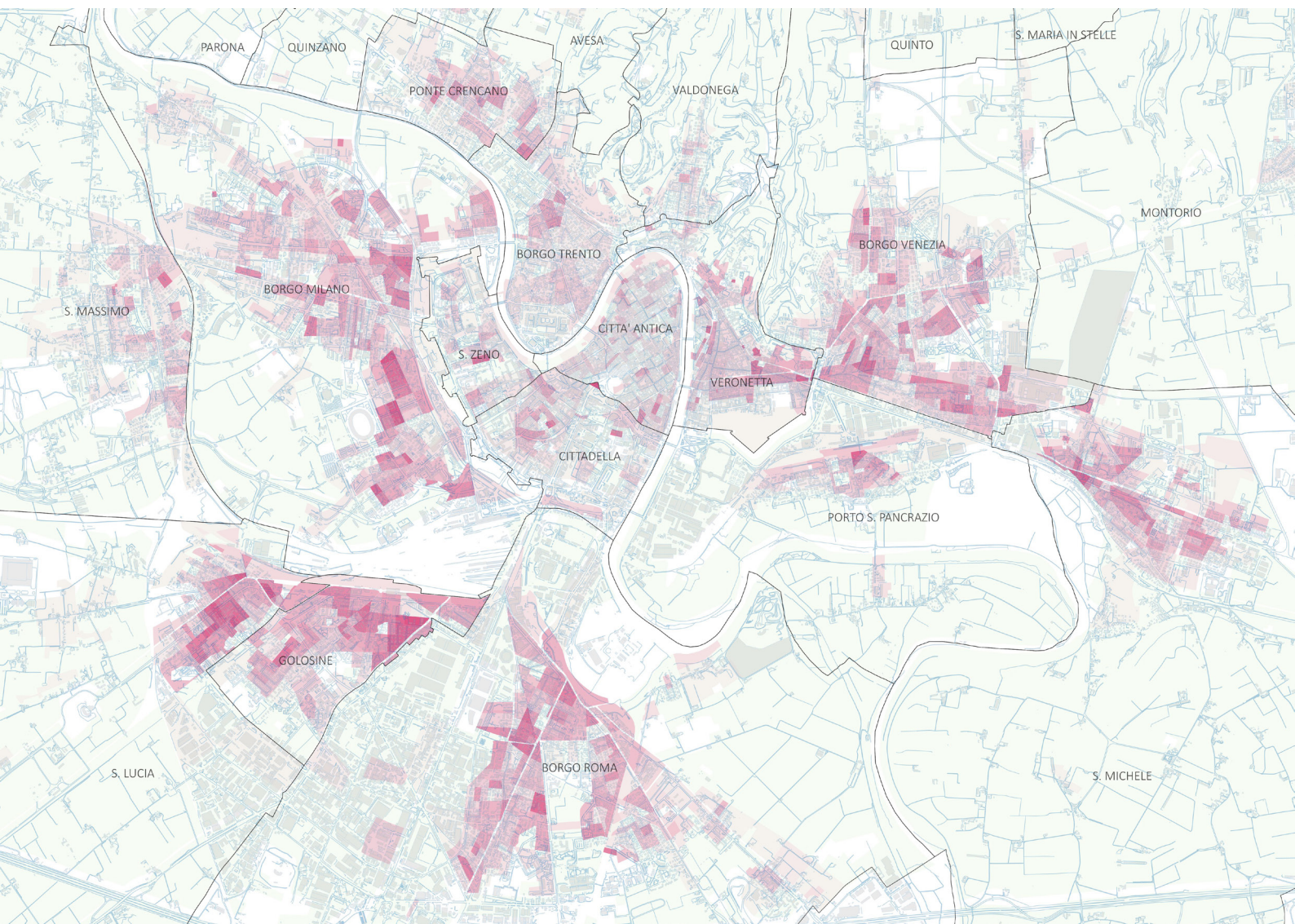
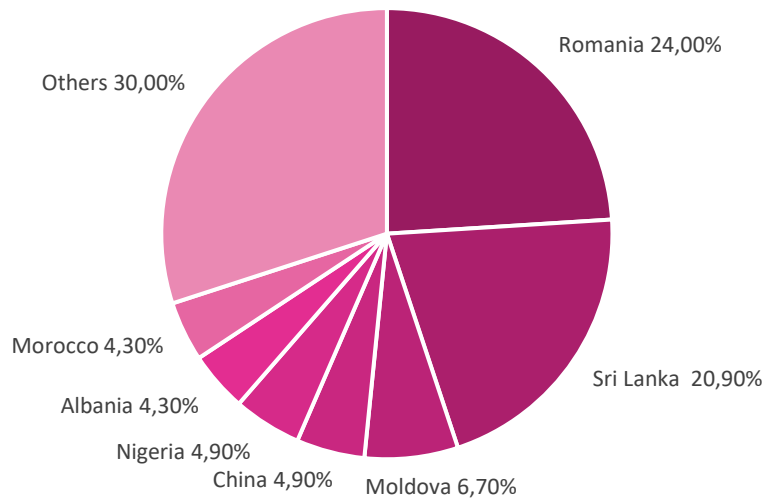
Even if foreign communities increased the incidence of foreigners in young population decreased by 4% since 2007.

The larger foreign communities come from Romania, Sri Lanka, Moldova, China, Nigeria, Albania and Morocco (Tuttitalia, n.d.a).

Foreign people tend to concentrate in semi central areas and peripheries of the city. In particular in the neighbourhoods Golosine, Borgo Roma, Borgo Milano and Borgo Venezia.

In the last survey "Quality of life in European cities" elaborated by the European Commission, 58,3% of the interviewed Veroneses stated that Verona is a good city for ethnic minorities and 53,4% stated that the city is welcoming to immigrants(ISTAT,2024b).



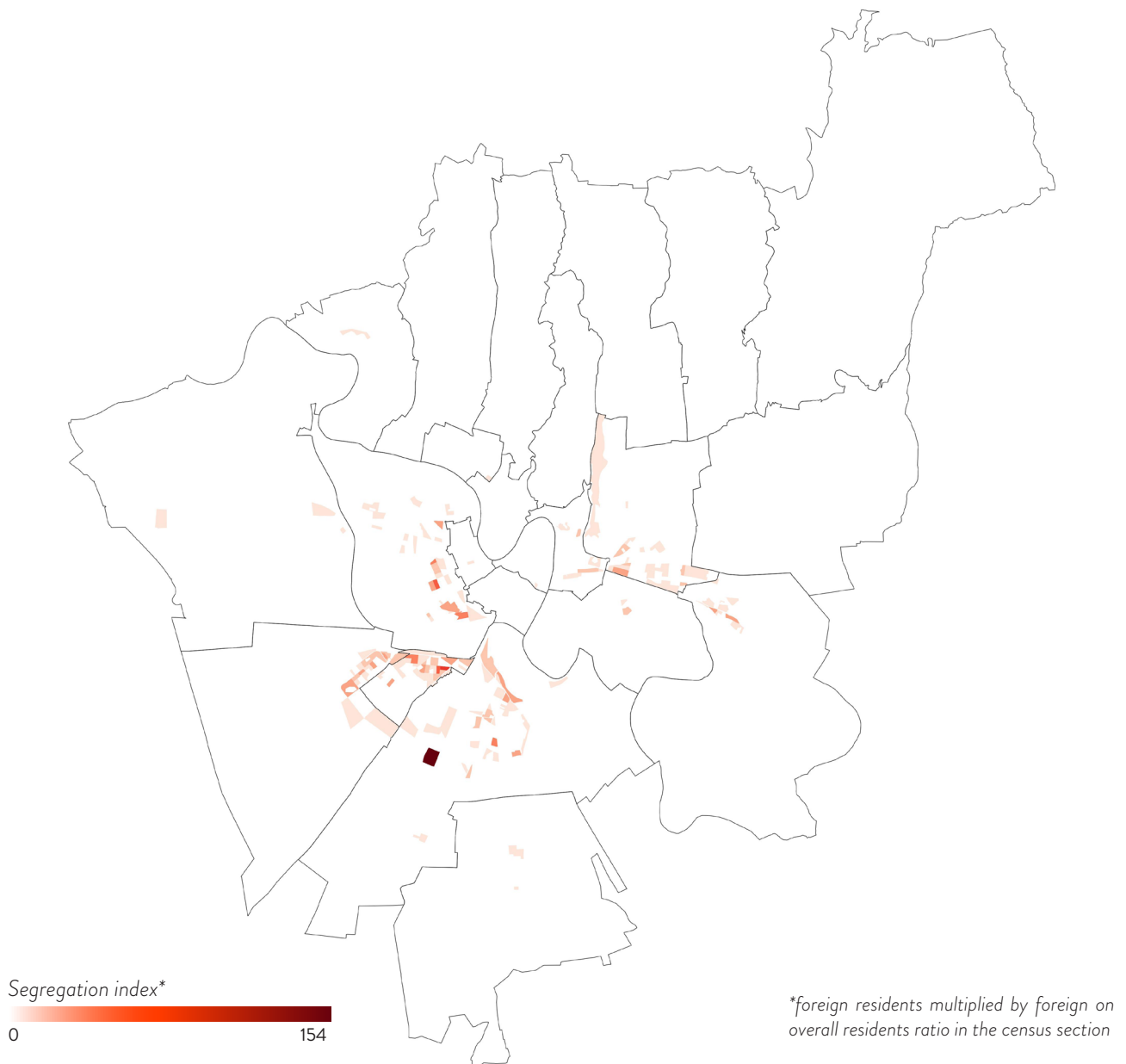


Foreign people segregation

The growth of foreign communities in the cities tend to accumulate in peripheral parts of the city.

In particular in the neighbourhoods of Borgo Roma, Golosine, Santa Lucia, Borgo Milano and Borgo Venezia and some blocks in the neighbourhood San Michele. In areas close to infrastructures such as the hydroelectric power plant, or the southside of Porta Nuova railway yard and in industrial areas, it is possible to highlight some phenomenas of segregation in specific blocks.

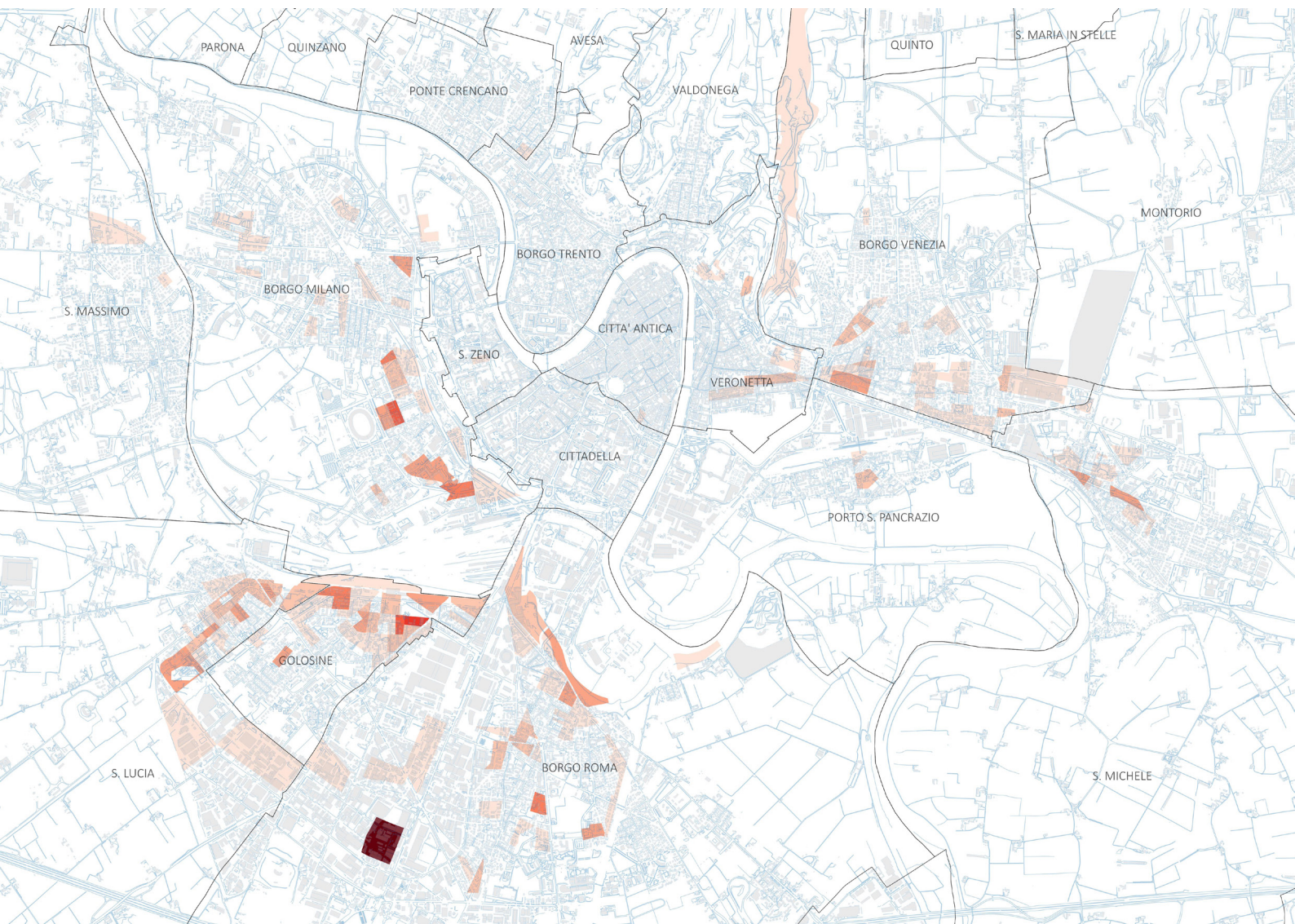
It must be noted that the concentration of foreign people in Borgo Roma partially comes from the presence of a refugee reception center.



The municipality of Verona and various local organizations have made efforts to promote integration and reduce segregation. These initiatives include language courses, intercultural dialogue programs, support services for immigrants, and community events that bring together people from different backgrounds. The goal is to foster social cohesion, improve mutual understanding, and address some of the root causes of segregation (Comune di Verona, n.d.).

Schools in Verona, particularly those in diverse neighbourhoods, often run special programs to support immigrant students, such as language learning and cultural integration activities. These programs aim to improve educational outcomes and promote interaction between different communities (Cestim, n.d.).

Several non-governmental organizations and community groups work in Verona to combat segregation and discrimination. They provide services such as legal assistance, housing support, language classes, job training, and cultural mediation. These organizations play a critical role in helping immigrants navigate local society and build connections with the broader community (Caritas Diocesana Veronese, n.d.).



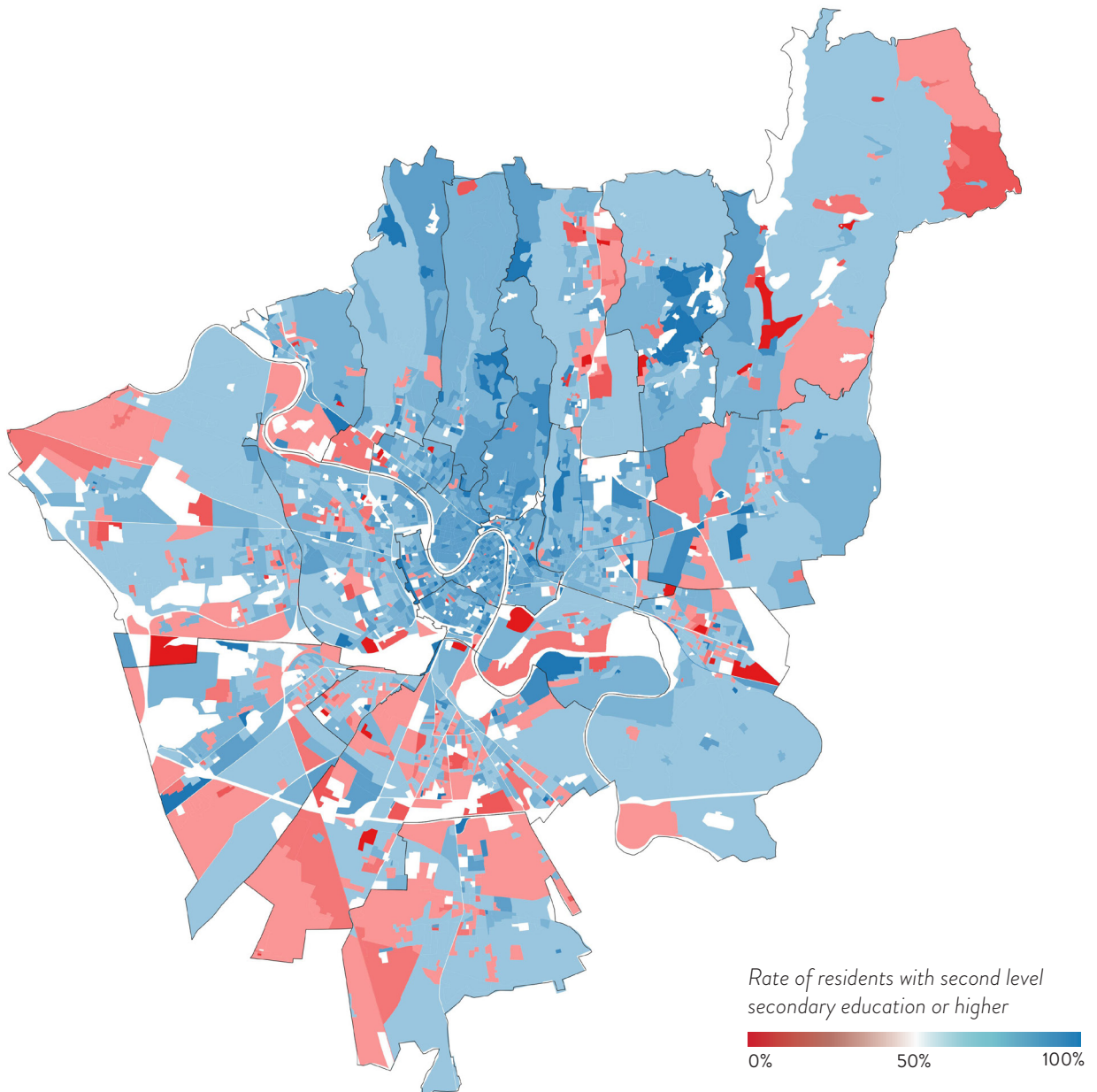
School drop-outs

Around 40,5% of the residents in Verona hasn't graduated from second grade secondary schools.

This underlines a situation that is better than the regional trend (51,4%).

Residents with lower education levels concentrate in rural areas and in some areas of Borgo Roma and Golosine and in the fraction Quinto

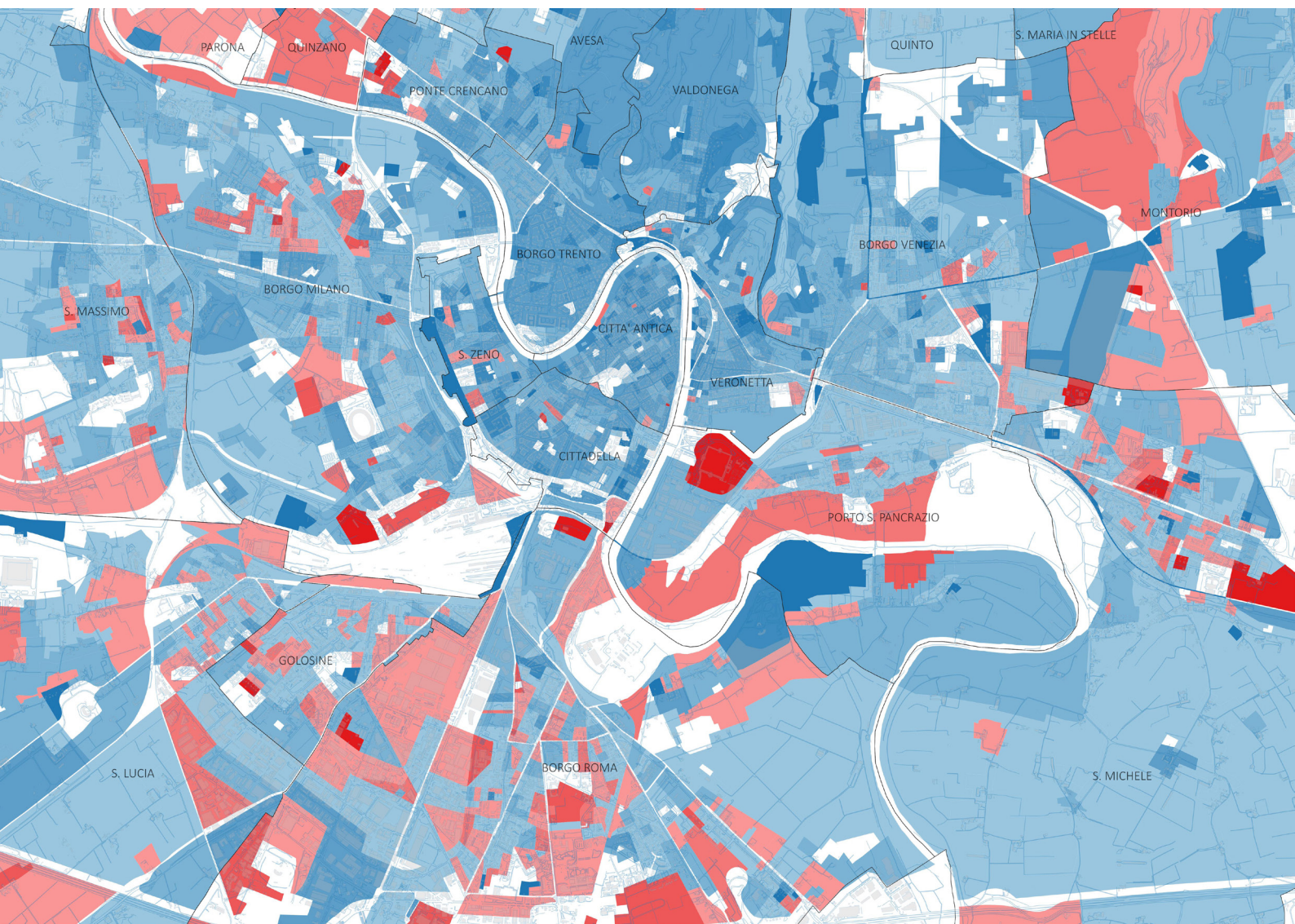
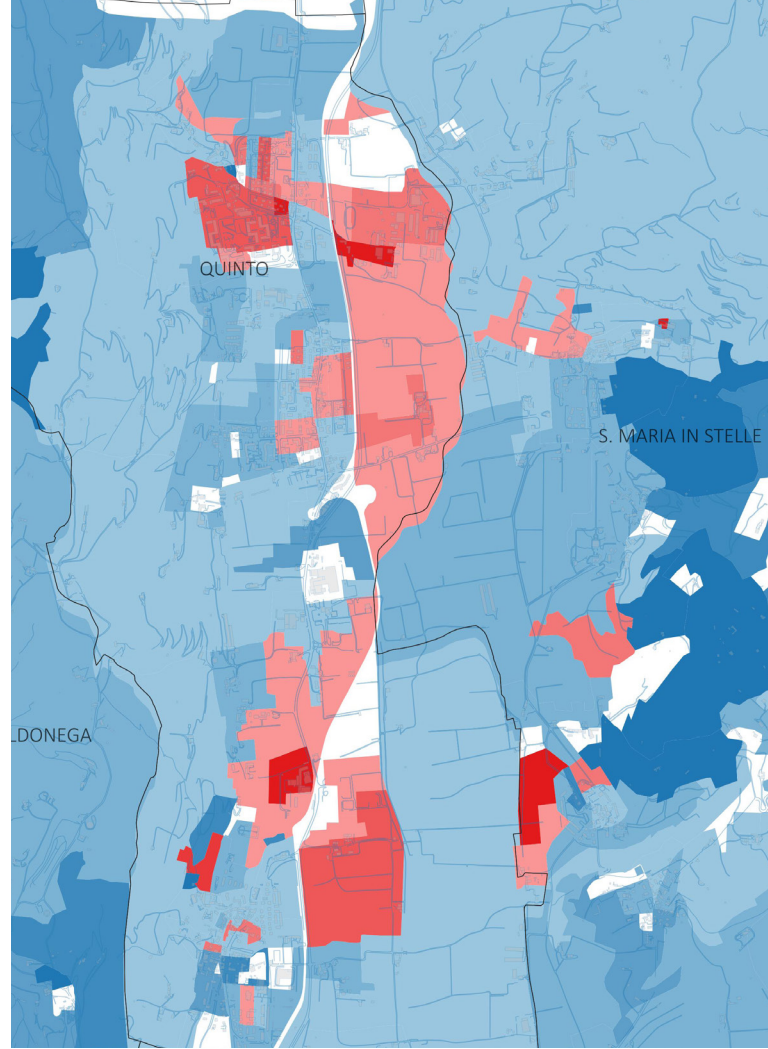
At province level, the low levels of NEETS and high rate of young graduates compared with national standards, highlights the education sector as a strenght point.



At province level middle school students perform better than the national average both in math test (11th out of 107 provinces) and in writing and reading tests (27th out of 107), they tend to practice sport more, there are high presence of green and sport facilities and paediatricians.

The presence of museums is also particularly high (13th out of 107th), there are numerous workers in the cultural sector (25th out of 107 provinces).

The reading index is quite high (36th out of 107 provinces) even if the presence of libraries is lower than the national average (Il Sole 24 Ore, n.d.a)

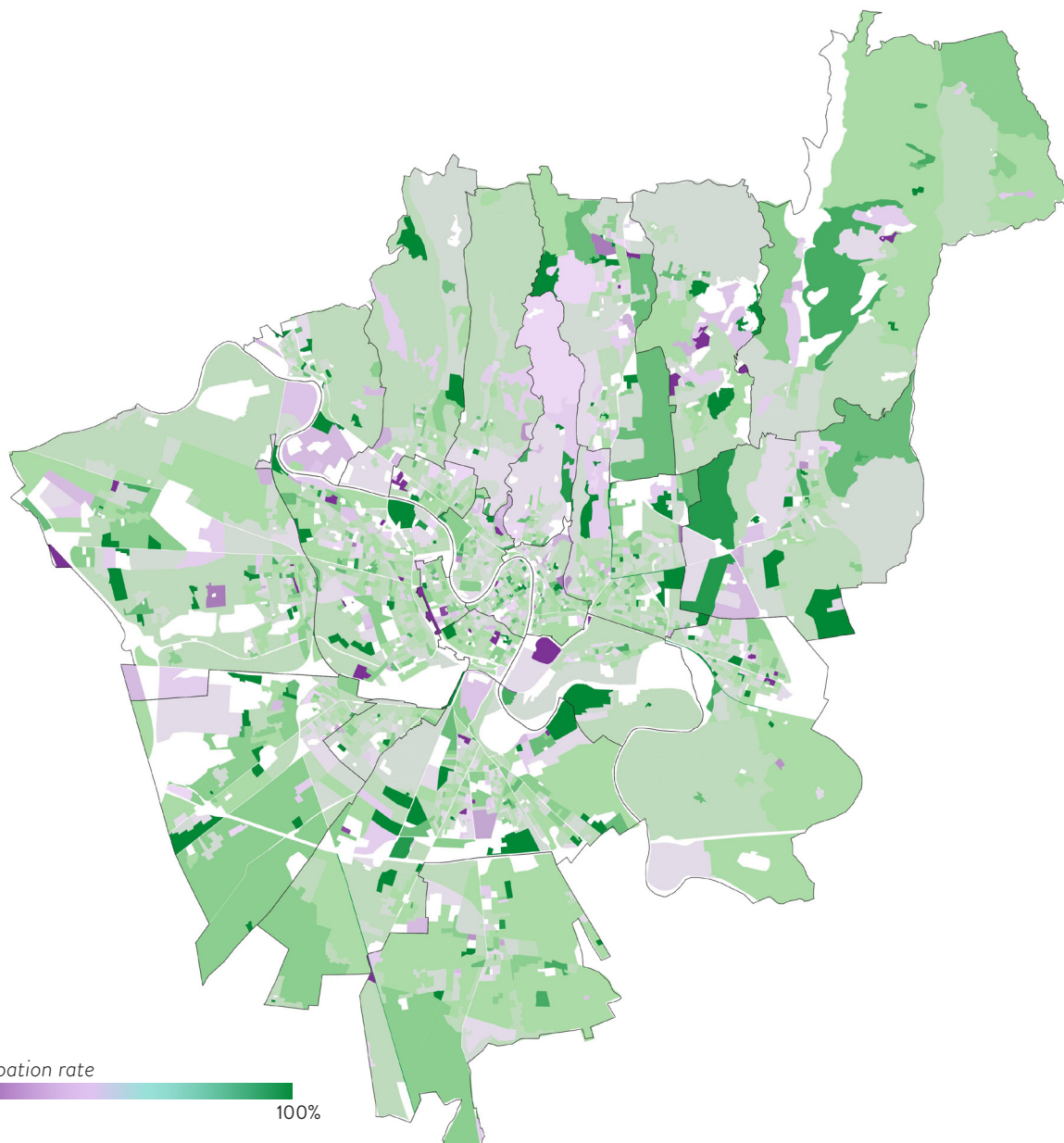


Occupation

In 2021 the occupation level in Verona was 67,5% which was higher than the national average 59% (ISTAT, 2021a) and similar to the regional average 67,5% (ISTAT, n.d.a).

In fact, the next maps don't show significant areas with low levels of occupation apart from the Valdon-ega neighbourhood in the north of the urban center which is inhabited by many well off elderly Veroneses (Fasoli, 2024).

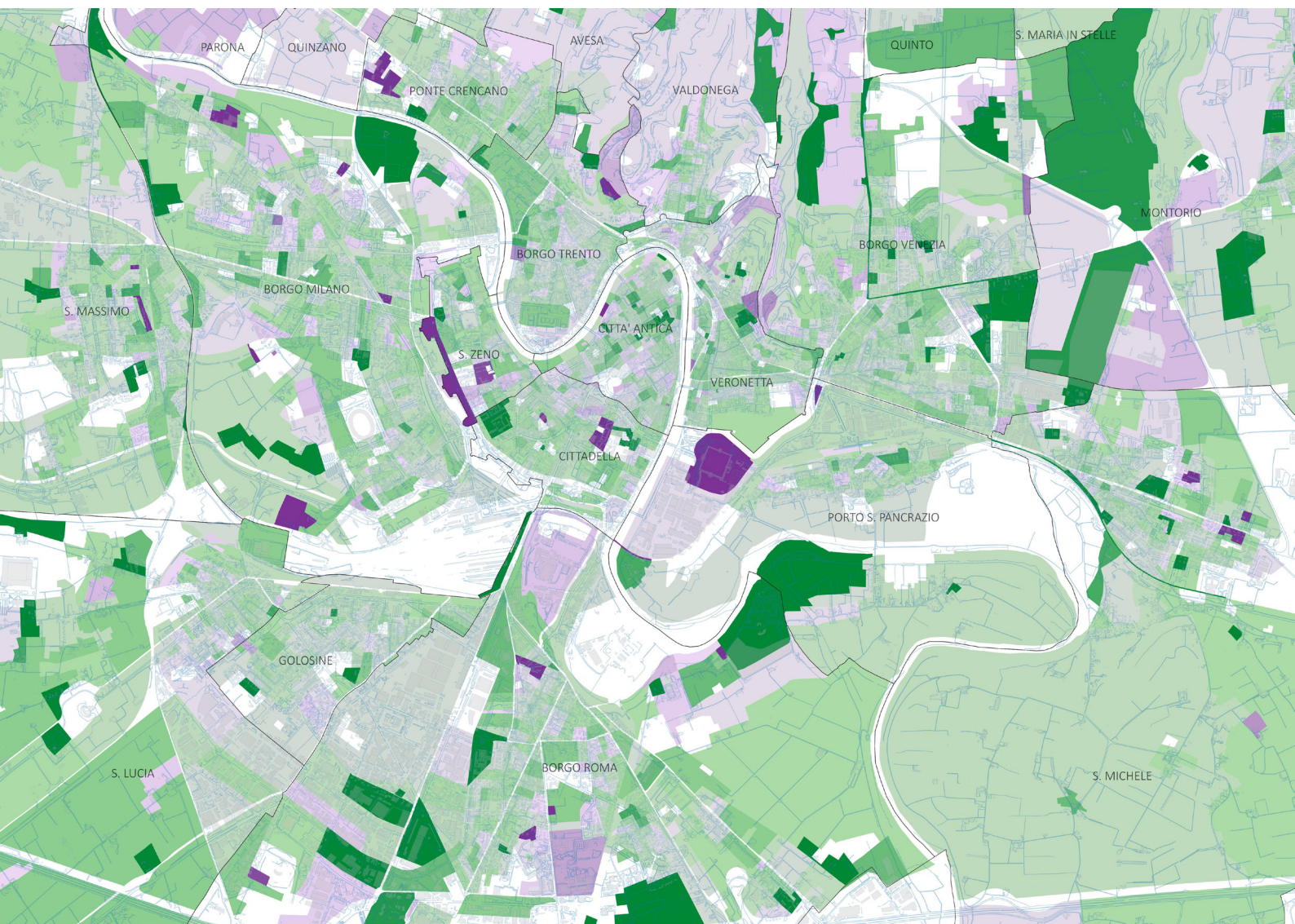
Considering more recent data at province level, Verona can be considered one of the most florid areas in Italy for businesses (23rd out of 107 provinces, according to Il Sole 24 Ore elaborations).



In 2023 Verona distinguished itself in terms of occupation rate, number of Innovative Start-ups (14th out of 107 provinces), e-commerce businesses, with a high number of new established businesses, a high number of foreign businesses (12,8%), lower rate of NEETs (13.7%, 33rd out of 107 provinces), higher rates of people in smart working, high rate of exports on the GDP (Il Sole 24 Ore, n.d.a).

On the other hand Verona performed slightly under national average in terms of youth entrepreneurship, gender pay gap, participation to continuous training and accidents on work places. The number of ceased businesses is also higher than national average (Il Sole 24 Ore, n.d.a).

It must be noted that in the last survey “Quality of life in European cities” elaborated by the European Commission, only 44,8% of the interviewed Veroneses stated that it is easy to find a good job in the city. (ISTAT,2024b).



YOUTH POLICY SUBSYSTEM

Institutional level: municipal frame in charge of youth policies

Youth policies in the Municipality of Verona are coordinated by the Youth Policies Service, which is part of the Innovation, Common Goods, Youth Policies and Equal Opportunities Directorate. The Service promotes protagonism, civic participation, involvement in listening processes of young people aged 14 to 35. The Councillor responsible for youth policies for the Municipality of Verona is Jacopo Buffolo. Its mandates are the following: Youth and participation policies, Equal opportunities, Innovation, Historical Memory and Human Rights.

Since June 2022, with the new center-left Administration led by Mayor Damiano Tommasi, the Councillor has been Jacopo Buffolo. Buffolo is a young man (29 years old) who in the past was a delegate for the CGIL at the National Youth Council and local and national director of the ReTe degli Studenti Medi, a youth organization representing high school students. The structure of the Youth Policy Service is rather limited from a staffing point of view, but the Councillor has been very active over the last two years.

The activities promoted by the Municipality towards young people were oriented in the following directions:

Promotion of entrepreneurship and youth protagonism, also through the activation of tenders (including the “In Onda” call which will be discussed in detail later);

Participation in activities promoted at regional level, also through activation processes and direct participation of young people. Among these activities, we highlight participation in the Regional Intervention Plans. The intervention plans regarding youth policies were established in 2017, and are developed collectively by the District Mayors’ Committees and are divided into annual projects, specifically aimed at the young population aged between 15 and 29, and they are operationally managed by the entities, public or private, who developed them and provide for a participation with own or other resources (such as private grants or other financing) of no less than 25%. In this context, the subjects who could be involved in the “Intervention Plan regarding Youth Policies” in 2023 are: the ULSS companies, the voluntary organizations (law n.226/1991) registered in the Register regional, social cooperatives and their consortia registered in

the regional register, secondary schools (public and private) and Venetian Universities. The new design of the intervention plans, which took place between the months of May and June 2023, stood out, compared to the previous rounds, for a new shared and participatory approach with the municipalities in the area;

Promotion and management of spaces for young people, including the Link youth aggregation space, to which the second case study will be dedicated;

Participation, as a partner in tenders and activities promoted by private actors. In this context, the collaboration with the Cariverona Foundation is important, as part of an urban regeneration initiative in peripheral neighbourhoods, oriented towards the reuse and recovery of spaces and properties that could be used by young people;

Participation in European initiatives, including Re-Gen, financed under the Urbact IV community initiative, with the aim of developing good practices of sustainable urban development through sport;

Cultural initiatives. Among these, the “Spazi LIBeRI” (Free spaces) project stands out in particular. Spazi Liberi is a project financed by the Department for Youth Policies and Universal Civil Service at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers through which libraries become spaces open to cultural contamination with various institutional and social facilities in the heart of the neighbourhoods. In particular, the project intends to significantly expand the offer of spaces and meeting times dedicated to boys and girls in three decentralized libraries, identified in the project as progressively scalable models throughout the municipal territory.

In addition to the initiatives reported, the Municipality directly manages the Servizio Civile Universale. In Italy, the Servizio Civile Universale represents an opportunity for all citizens (from 18 to 28 years old) who want to contribute to the development of the well-being of society, through initiatives that demonstrate a spirit of solidarity, respect for rights and assumption of civic responsibilities. In this context, the Municipality of Verona is part of the network of municipalities for the planning and activation of universal

civil service projects, helping to promote civil service projects centered on youth protagonism and connection with territorial actors.

The Youth Policy Service then manages a series of curricular internships at various structures in the Municipality of Verona, in which young people who collaborate with the Administration in different areas are placed.

In terms of employment and training policies, the Municipality of Verona operates through the Employment Policies Service, which depends on Councillor Michele Bertucco, who has responsibilities for Budget, Assets, Work, Personnel, Purchasing, Contracts and Utilities and the Biennial Plan of Purchasing.

There are no services in the field of employment policies that are specifically aimed at young people, although some services, including the Information Space for Information and First Orientation (a free access service that offers information and first orientation interviews on work, professions, opportunities, training) are aimed primarily at a young audience.

The Labour Policy Services also provides information and guidance for secondary school students interested in carrying out PCTO experiences (Percorsi per le Competenze Trasversali e per l'Orientamento - Paths for Transversal Skills and Orientation) within the municipal administration of Verona.

Overall, the Administration's activity on the youth policy front appears broad and articulated, although there is perhaps a lack of full and effective coordination between the different sectors of the Administration and with the regional Administration, which act in areas that interfere both with youth policies transition to adulthood, both with people's support policies capacity and expression.

Relevant non-institutional actors usually involved across all local youth policies

The urban framework youth policies of the Municipality of Verona highlights the growing role of the actors who directly represent the youth world not only as the target population of the policies, but also as policy makers. In this context, an essential role was played by the active listening process that the Youth Policy Sector, and in particular Councillor Jacopo Buffolo, produced in the first phase of the current mandate.

To give concrete implementation to the approach taken by the municipal administration, the Department of Youth and Participation Policies has promoted a process of listening to the youth realities present in the area in order to collect proposals, needs and requests from young people with a view to planning targeted activities of the Municipality of Verona starting from September 2023.

"InconTRA" is a participative initiative, which began on 04/06/2023 and concluded on 27/09/2023, saw the participation of 120 boys (66) and girls (54), aged between 15 and 29 and coming from almost all the districts of the city.

The meetings were held during the summer in various places in the city and highlighted some themes: the need for boys and girls to have meeting spaces within the city, where young people can be protagonists starting from direct management of the place; the need to set up spaces suitable for practice sports; the care of public green spaces, understood as an op-

portunity to take advantage of quality free meeting spaces.

With a view to facilitating contact between the Municipality and the younger townspeople and citizens, the collaboration with various organizations already structured in the area was important, including: UDU - University Students' Union; the ARCI Yanez club; ASD Skate Park Galliano; Social Energy Cooperative; the Neighbourhood Factory; Legambiente; Xtinction Rebellion ; ADI Verona; Strapazzo writers; JEBV; Erasmus Student Network; Theater on Wheels association; NGO Progettomondo ; Milonga social cooperative, as well as some informal groups and young people who do not belong to specific associations.

Taken together, these representative actors of the youth world can be traced back to three families: representative actors, including UDU; actors who operate in the cultural and leisure fields, with a strong interest in the dimension of activation and entrepreneurship; actors linked to social and environmental issues.

An other theme that emerged from INconTRA were the need on the part of boys and girls for better communication by the Municipality of Verona, especially considering the impact that social networks and technologies have had on ways of disseminating information in recent years.

The most critical issue highlighted was that of the availability of information, highlighting how the sites and social channels were totally inadequate to reach the population, especially with regards to the youth target. Many of the young people showed interest in the Municipality initiatives: however, they found it substantially impossible to find out about them promptly through the channels of digital information. The Youth Policy Service, thanks to the help of the Civil Service volunteer, introduced the Instagram and Facebook social pages of the Youth Policy Service, carrying out a complete review of the web pages, which now offer a complete and constantly updated overview of the activities and events that the Youth Policy Service promotes.

In addition to the representative subjects of the youth world, an important role in the network of youth policies is played, as already mentioned, by the Cariverona Foundation, which has directed some of its urban regeneration projects to the recovery of spaces that can support entrepreneurship and protagonism youth.

It should also be noted that a territorial Hub of the Rete project is active in Verona. Rete is a project promoted by the Minister for Sport and Youth through the Department for Youth Policies and the Universal Civil Service of the Presidency of the Council of Min-

isters , in collaboration with Invitalia , responsible for creating and managing 12 pilot territorial hubs. One of the first Hubs was established in Verona, in partnership with the University, which focuses its attention on cultural and creative businesses.

Role of trade unions in the design and implementation of urban youth policies

The role of the Trade Unions , and in particular of the CGIL, in the design and implementation of youth policies in the context of Verona does not seem to be so much that of direct partnership in individual projects, but rather that of a role of stimulus and suggestion towards the policy making.

The very close relationship between the Department of Youth Policies and the Verona CGIL represents a central element in the participatory approach to policies, with a strong emphasis on the direct involvement of formal and informal youth groups.

In the last two years the CGIL has also participated directly in "JOB&Orienta", the most important Italian fair dedicated to orientation, school, training and work, promoted by the Veneto Region, which takes place in Verona in collaboration with Veronafiere and with the national government. This participation has allowed the Venetian CGIL to enrich its system of relations with the network of actors who in various capacities deal with actions and policies for training and youth work.

Remarks on the urban policy subsystem

The urban policy subsystem, in the case of Verona, appears to be strongly hinged on the Municipality, especially after the change of administration (with the transition from a centre-right to a centre-left majority which took place two years ago, in June 2022).

A pivotal role in the network is assumed by the Councillor for Youth Policies and Participation, through the Youth Policies Sector which has inaugurated a new season of projects and actions strongly based on the direct involvement of young people and the formal and informal entities that represent them.

In terms of employment, orientation and training policies, a review of some services is underway in order to make them more youth friendly, also through a stimulating role of the Trade Union and in particular of the CGIL.

Both from the Focus Group and the analysis of the two cases, a strong orientation towards horizontal coordination between different types of actors emerges. In particular, there is a strong focus on the direct involvement of youth groups during the policy design phases. The involvement of private actors, such as the Cariverona banking foundation, is also important.

The level of internal horizontal coordination within the Municipality of Verona is less effective. Coordination actions between sectors of the municipal administration seem less structured (for example, in the identification of spaces for new services such as the planned but not yet realised Casa dei Riders (Riders' house), to be built in the center of Verona), in order to increase the effectiveness of youth policies through interaction with housing, welfare and transport policies. Equally incomplete are the vertical governance relationships between the Municipality and the Region, while an interesting inter-municipal cooperation is developing on some European projects and regional tenders.

Overall, the network appears rich and articulated, although much remains to be done to ensure greater centrality to youth policies in the urban agenda and to encourage the promotion of an intersectoral approach.

Se si analizza poi il ruolo degli attori sociali, la loro presenza all'interno del network è indiretta ma rilevante, in quanto forniscono un riferimento importante ad alcuni attori del mondo giovanile. Ciò è vero in particolare per quanto riguarda la CGIL (Camera del Lavoro di Verona)

Finally, from the point of view of the organization of the policy network, it can be stated that the informal dimension, often based on direct and personal rela-

tionships, has played an essential role in the activities of the last two years, after a long phase of almost total absence of a clear policy direction.

On the other hand, if the listening and participation paths of young people have been strongly promoted and supported, perhaps the level of structuring of the policy network could be strengthened.

In this context, the role played by trade union actors, and in particular by CGIL, appears significant but predominantly informal, being also based on personal relationships of some key actors with trade union organizations and in particular with the CGIL.

The main characteristics of the policy network, in summary, are as follows:

- Presence of strong political leadership, headed by the Department of Youth Policies, which plays a pivotal role, particularly in the field of enabling policies (culture, urban regeneration, services). The role of this department is less strong when it comes to active labour and training policies.
- Significant level of activation of local actors, especially representative and cultural associations that operate in the youth sector.
- More limited coordination between different areas of action within the Municipal Administration.
- Some difficulties on the vertical governance front, especially in the relations between the Municipality, the Province, and the Region.
- Relative stability and openness of the network, which is managed and sustained through periodic meetings, both to monitor the implementation of specific policies and to discuss the general guidelines of youth policies.
- An enabling role played by social partners, particularly by trade unions.

Overall, the conditions for effectiveness emerging in the policy network in Verona seem closely connected, on one hand, to the identification of clear leadership within the Municipality, and on the other hand, to the involvement and empowerment of youth groups in the design and activation of policies, particularly in the realm of policies that support people's capacity and expression.

IN_ONDA

IN_ONDA is a call put in place by the Municipality of Verona to collect, select and finance projects and activities created by informal groups and youth associations (16-30 years old) in the municipal area.

IN_ONDA offers concrete support to the proposals of the city's young people aimed, in particular, at the use, redevelopment or regeneration of spaces, for the promotion and organization of cultural, recreational and recreational activities.

The Municipality of Verona, with this initiative, wanted to promote creativity and increase the capabilities of formal and informal youth groups and actors in the planning and care of public places and spaces to make them usable and functional also with respect to their own expectations and own time.

The call was incubated as part of the active listening activities promoted by the Department of Youth Policies of the Municipality of Verona, and took as its starting point the valorization of creativity but also of the managerial capacity of young people.

Topics

IN_ONDA is a call proposed by the Municipality of Verona to collect, select and finance projects and activities created by informal groups and youth associations (16 - 30 years old) in the municipal area, in order to design and take care of places and public spaces to make them usable and functional.

Beneficiaries - Target group

The project finances the implementation of urban regeneration interventions of public spaces or spaces open to the public located in the territory of the Municipality of Verona, designed and implemented by girls and boys aged 18 - 30 years. The proposed initiatives or activities must be aimed primarily at the involvement of boys and girls in the 14 - 30 age group.

Comune di Verona. (2024). IN_ONDA



The proposals are presented both by informal groups or unrecognized associations, and by legal entities (recognized associations, cooperatives, foundations, voluntary organizations, etc.) without profit.

The interventions and activities covered by the proposal must be carried out and developed in closed or open spaces located in the municipal territory, owned by the Municipality. They can also be located in spaces owned by third parties, with the explicit consent declared by the legitimate owner who can dispose of them.

Contents

Policy goals

The interventions envisaged by the call concern actions for the recovery or regeneration of spaces, through the identification of activities freely chosen by the proponents and which, although not involving a substantial alteration of the places, can also be achieved through the installation of equipment or furnishings.

The proposals may concern both the creation of one or more events or initiatives, to take place during the year 2024, and actions intended to last over time. In this second case, it will be possible for the proponents to sign a subsidiarity pact with the municipality for the care of the places and/or the continuation of the activities.

Subsidiarity agreements represent a simplified tool for the care of tangible and intangible common goods, made available to citizens by the Municipality according to the provisions of the specific regulation.

The proposals selected for the assignment of contributions, also at the request of the proponents, can be accompanied by the municipal administration in a co-planning process.

Overall, IN-ONDA therefore finances urban regeneration paths that focus on youth creativity to make underused spaces usable and active, also with a view to promoting youth entrepreneurship.

Policy instruments

The interventions envisaged by the call concern actions for the recovery or regeneration of spaces which are financed with a total grant of €20,000.

Although the grant is limited, for youth groups and associations participation in the call can be important because it allows the activation of: co-design, advice and counselling paths; subsidiarity pacts (governed by specific regulations), which allow groups of young people to use the space covered by the proposal for a longer period of time.

Expected results

The expected results can be summarized in the following points:

- respond at least partially to the demand for self-managed spaces by youth groups and organizations;
- promote the empowerment of formal and informal youth subjects in the design and management of spaces, with a view to urban regeneration;
- promote a more comprehensive path of involvement and activation of actors operating in the world of young people

Achieved results

An accurate evaluation of the results obtained is not yet possible because the projects are still ongoing. However, it is possible to say that the call was a success. As many as 20 projects were presented; 14 were selected and funded.

Among the projects selected and financed, by way of example, we highlight the following:

The Golo: promoted by the informal group “Zanghi”. The project proposes the creation of a neighbourhood artistic festival, to spread and raise awareness of hip hop and underground culture, with the aim of involving young people in local realities, in the associations presented and in subsidiarity pacts or stipulate new ones;

Spazio Nova: promoted by UDU Verona. It involves the creation of a meeting place in a no longer used warehouse, offering cultural and training services. The project involves the regeneration of the current warehouse spaces to create a multifunctional environment capable of satisfying the different needs of the university community and beyond: self-managed study room, film club, bicycle maintenance, musical events, sporting initiatives, etc.

Spazi insoliti: promoted by the Yanez Association (now ARCI club). The project involves the use of the space of a cultural center for long-term activities, including a co-working space with other already active associations. The center is imagined as a daily reference space for the neighbourhood to create exchanges, contacts and contaminations between young people

Ri -Ciak giovani: promoted by the Ri -Ciak community cinema for the reuse of an abandoned cinema through painting workshops, shows, theatre, various screenings, dance, photography and drawing contests.

These projects, illustrative of the 14 funded projects, show that, despite the limited funding, the IN_ONDA Call has mobilized considerable energy in the youth world of Verona, both in terms of cultural and aggregation activities and in terms of study and work services. (co-working spaces).

At the end of 2024 it will be possible to give a complete evaluation of the call.

Nature of policy change

The call certainly contributed to consolidating the inclusive and participatory approach promoted by the municipal administration, especially through the co-design process of the call, which also saw as protagonists some of the subjects who then participated in the call, and who highlighted the need to simplify both the participation mechanism and the granting of financing.

The latter, in particular, often constitutes a very strong obstacle to the activation of small and informal entities, which instead in this case were able to actively participate in the call and which saw some of their projects financed.

We can also say that IN-ONDA has also allowed the Administration to refine the most appropriate process and tools in the context of tenders for the use of public spaces or for public use, thus overall consolidating the ability to govern urban regeneration processes .

FAI. (n.d.) Ri - ciak Community cinema



Policy networks

From the point of view of the policy network, IN-ONDA is configured as an urban “pure” youth policy.

The main players are the Municipality of Verona, and its Youth Policy Sector. A crucial role is played in particular by the Councillor for Youth Policies and Participation, a true policy entrepreneur .

The youth associations who contributed to defining the directions of the call in the active listening phase which took place before the drafting and publicizing of the call. Among these, UDU, the university youth organization, and the Yanez Association, which later became an ARCI club, played a central role.

The twenty formal and informal actors who submitted their candidature. In some cases these actors already existed, in others they were formed around the project and in relation to participation in the tender. Furthermore, it is important to note that network relationships already existed between some of these actors, but that these relationships and networks intensified after the publication of the call.

The actors

Promoter and financier

Municipality of Verona , Youth Policy Sector

Co-designer

UDU Verona, university student association
Yanez Association, cultural association

Participants in the call

20 formal or informal groups and entities, some of which were set up ad hoc

Other subjects involved

State Property and Heritage Sector of the Municipality of Verona
Hub Rete di Verona, supporter of the project
Other owners of spaces covered by the projects

Remarks and Comments

The most interesting aspect of the IN-ONDA initiative concerns the process of structuring a policy network at the city level, with particular attention to involving actors from the youth sector. IN-ONDA can therefore be considered an enabling policy, aimed at strengthening the capabilities of actors after years of substantial inactivity by the City Administration in terms of youth policies.

Interactions

The network of actors was open and relatively stable, with a leading role of the Youth Policy Sector of the Municipality of Verona and an important role of some youth subjects.

Although there was no explicit social dialogue , a completely informal networking and facilitation role was played by the Verona CGIL, especially in promoting interaction between the Municipality and some young people linked to CGIL.

Another element to underline is that the structure of the policy has explicitly and intentionally strengthened both the relationships between the municipal administration and the youth world, and the horizontal networks between associations and informal youth actors. From this point of view we can speak of a policy explicitly aimed at networking.

IN-ONDA has acted as a tool both from the perspective of the agenda-setting process, with a strong focus on recognizing the needs of young people, and in terms of policy design. IN-ONDA has thus been an incubator for a new phase of urban youth policies for the City of Verona.

SPAZIO LINK

SPAZIO LINK (Link space) is a youth aggregation center located in Borgo Roma, an emerging neighbourhood that is partly residential and partly industrial, situated south of the city's center. SPAZIO LINK was originally created as a space for the city's youth and is now an integrated project. The LINK space was reopened in February 2024 by Verona Municipality after the property, which is publicly owned, had been underused for several years.

The reopening of SPAZIO LINK is seen by the Administration as part of a broader policy to re-purpose abandoned or underused public spaces, with the aim of promoting youth engagement and entrepreneurship.

For several years, the property had been managed through renewed concessions. However, starting from November 2023, the building was brought back under direct management by the Youth Policies Service of the Municipality of Verona. The center features large indoor and outdoor spaces, allowing for a variety of activities, ranging from studying to informal gatherings, as well as events, concerts, and video screenings.

Looking ahead, the Municipality of Verona intends to enhance and expand the center's use by young people. This will be achieved through the creation of a calendar where both structured activities and free-form initiatives, developed by the young people who frequent the center, can coexist. These initiatives will include outdoor activities and interaction with the life of the neighbourhood and the local community organizations.

The LINK Youth Center aims to become an increasingly welcoming and stimulating place for young people aged 10 to 35. The center resumed its activities at its location on Via Benedetti 26/b, in Borgo Roma, coinciding with the presentation of the winners of the "IN_ONDA" call for proposals.

The Municipality of Verona's goal is to create a space where young people can express themselves and receive guidance. This will be supported by the activities under the "Youth and Generativity" intervention Plan, funded by the Veneto Region. The plan includes activities aimed at preventing youth

Comune di Verona. (2024). SPAZIO LINK



distress and fostering youth participation and creativity.

To implement the plan, the Cocai association, an association involving young local architects and planners, has been involved. Cocai leads the project “The Neighbourhood Factory”, which received a grant from the Cariverona Foundation following the 2020 Community Actions call. Since June 2021, the project has been carrying out community engagement activities in Borgo Roma, focusing particularly on the neighborhood’s urban transformation and regeneration, with special attention to the young people in the area.

Topic

SPAZIO LINK was conceived as a multifunctional space where both structured and informal activities can coexist, with young people playing a leading role in planning and utilizing the various available spaces. The planning of activities at LINK, starting with a listening process in February 2024, intersects with the implementation of initiatives funded by the IN_ONDA Call, which will bring the space to life with cultural, sporting, and beautification activities for the outdoor areas.

Beneficiaries - Target group

LINK is envisioned as a “hybrid” space where projects and activities for young people aged 10 to 35 can coexist. The goal of the Municipality of Verona is to create a space where young people can express themselves and find guidance, supported by the activities of the “Youth and Generativity” intervention plan, funded by the Veneto Region. One of the most interesting aspects is that the center’s activities will be open to both organized groups and individual young people, fostering an environment that encourages intergenerational interaction.

Content

Policy goals

One key goal is to address youth distress. In this context, the integration of LINK’s activities with the “Youth and Generativity” intervention plan, funded by the Veneto Region, plays a central role. This plan includes activities aimed at preventing youth distress and fostering youth participation and creativity. The Cocai association, leader of the “Neighbourhood Factory” project, has been involved to achieve this objective. The project was awarded a grant by the Cariverona Foundation as part of the 2020 Community Actions call and has been working since June 2021 to engage the community of Borgo Roma in the neighborhood’s urban transformation and regeneration, with particular attention to the youth.

From this perspective, the project to reactivate the LINK space can be seen as a component of a broader strategy for urban regeneration at the neighbourhood level.

La fabbrica del quartiere

The Cariverona banking foundation promoted the project “La Fabbrica del Quartiere” (Neighbourhood factory) as part of its strategy to improve the quality of life in Verona’s neighbourhoods. The project focuses on the relationship between the community and the urban neighbourhood, starting with the residents themselves and the knowledge and mapping of the area. Through a shared process of social and urban micro-interventions, it aims to improve the well-being of both individuals and the community, emphasizing a responsible and participatory care for the common good.

This innovative approach is the foundation of the pilot project “La Fabbrica del Quartiere”, supported by the Cariverona Foundation through the Community Actions Call, launched in the Borgo Roma neighbourhood in summer 2021. The initiative was led by COCAI Aps, a social promotion association established by professionals (architects, urban planners, and engineers) who have been working since 2017 on urban transformation, redevelopment, and social innovation through experimental cultural initiatives.

The two-year project, which primarily involves young people between the ages of 16 and 35, is divided into three phases. The first phase, a community mapping effort, began in summer 2021 and is still ongoing. The second phase involves “giving back to the territory” through small urban regeneration projects. The third phase will launch a social enterprise to formalize the Fabbrica’s activities, with the trained youth taking a leading role.

The project is based in the “Il Borgo” building complex, which has become a hub for active participation in the Borgo Roma community. It serves as a special observatory to capture the needs and demands of residents. The first phase of community

Policy instruments

The activities planned at LINK are partly scheduled in connection with the implementation of some of the projects awarded in the “IN-ONDA” call, and partly linked to the “La Fabbrica dei Quartieri” project. However, alongside these scheduled activities, LINK also offers the possibility to use various indoor and outdoor spaces in the building, which can be requested by formal and informal youth groups.

At LINK, the following spaces and services are available for use:

- A large multi-purpose hall
- A small room for meetings or interviews for small groups
- A mezzanine with tables and chairs
- Two rehearsal rooms equipped with musical instruments
- A recording studio
- An outdoor basketball and volleyball court.



La Fabbrica del Quartiere. (2024). Il Borgo delle Donne (Women neighborhood)

mapping began in August 2021, with listening initiatives and interviews conducted with residents and key neighbourhood figures to raise awareness and involve them actively in the project. To date, over 200 people have been involved, including 130 young people between the ages of 16 and 35, working to map key landmarks, stakeholders, and the ways the community uses the neighborhood’s gathering spaces.

Expected results

The expected results can be summarized as follows:

- Addressing the demand for self-managed spaces by youth groups and organizations.
- Promoting integrated urban regeneration processes in a dynamic city neighbourhood, focusing on creativity and youth participation.
- Integrating various initiatives into a single space, fostering stronger networks among youth-focused entities.

Achieved Results

It is not yet possible to provide an accurate evaluation of the results (as the space was only reopened a few months ago). However, interviews indicate that the mere reactivation of the LINK space has led to an increase in relationships and networks between youth organizations and institutions, as well as a rise in the demand for gathering spaces from both formal and informal youth groups.

Nature of policy change

The reactivation of the LINK space has undoubtedly contributed to the increased density of policy networks related to youth policies in Verona. Additionally, the decision of the Municipality to resume direct management of the space, contrary to trends in many other Italian cities, reflects a strategic shift by the local government following the change in political leadership. Another significant aspect of this change is the growing focus on co-designing and involving youth organizations in the redesign of the space's management and the implementation of concrete ideas for its use.

Actors

Promoter and financier

Co-designer

Participants in the call

Other subjects involved

Municipality of Verona , Youth Policy Sector

Fondazione Cariverona, Regione Veneto

Youth associations active in the Borgo Roma neighbourhood and at the city level

Young residents and users of the Borgo Roma neighbourhood

Policy network

The main actors are the Municipality of Verona, and its Youth Policies Department. A crucial role is played by the Councillor for Youth Policies and Participation. The Veneto Region, as the funder of the “Youth and Generativity” intervention plan, aimed at addressing youth distress and promoting the active participation of young people in community life.

Fondazione Cariverona, as the promoter and funder of the “La Fabbrica di Quartiere” project, which found significant support for the development of its activities within the LINK space.

Youth associations, which contributed to defining the guidelines for the use of the LINK space, also through participation in the IN_ONDA Call

assistance to some of the youth groups involved in the co-design activities

Remarks and Comments

The project to reactivate the LINK space can be considered interesting for the following reasons:

- It is an explicit attempt to assign the Municipality a direct role in managing youth gathering spaces, after years in which the Municipality had stepped back from actively promoting and implementing urban youth policies.
- It is a policy that builds on existing initiatives, offering itself as a platform for actions and projects promoted by others (for example, the Cariverona Foundation).
- The LINK space is not designated for the exclusive use of a single entity, but is designed as an open space for multiple target groups, where various activities can coexist. From this perspective, it is seen as a “hybrid” socio-cultural space.
- This approach to reactivating a publicly owned space aligns with a strong focus on urban regeneration policies as integrated policies, capable of involving a variety of public, private, and third-sector actors

Interactions

The network of actors has been open and relatively stable, with the Youth Policies Department of the Municipality of Verona playing a leading role, and external entities, as funders of other projects, playing an important role: Cariverona, in connection with the La Fabbrica del Quartiere project, and the Veneto Region in relation to the “Youth and Generativity” intervention plan.

The role of CGIL Verona in this project has been limited, although the union has provided support and as-

LECCE

Lecce is a city in Italy with a population of 94,553 inhabitants, serving as the capital of the homonymous province in the Puglia (Apulia) region.

Located in the heart of the Salento Peninsula, between the Adriatic and Ionian coasts, Lecce holds the distinction of being Italy's easternmost provincial capital. The city's history is deeply rooted in antiquity, with origins tracing back to the Messapian civilization, an ancient Italic people. Lecce also boasts significant archaeological remnants from its Roman past, cementing its status as one of Italy's art cities.

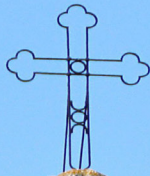
Often referred to as the "Lady of the Baroque," Lecce is renowned for its exuberant 17th-century Baroque architecture. The city's churches, palaces, and public buildings are adorned with intricate details, crafted from the local *pietra leccese*, a soft limestone particularly suited for sculpting.

Lecce is also home to the University of Salento, which plays a vital role in the city's academic and intellectual life. Additionally, in 2015, Lecce was recognized as Italy's Capital of Culture, highlighting its cultural significance on both national and international level.

The city not only attracts visitors for its historical and artistic heritage but also for its vibrant local traditions, cuisine, and proximity to some of the most beautiful coastlines in Italy. Its Baroque beauty, combined with a lively cultural scene and historical depth, make Lecce one of the main touristic destination in the Puglia region.

Lecce's economy is a blend of traditional sectors like agriculture and craftsmanship, combined with the dynamic growth of tourism, services, and renewable energy. Manufacturing in Lecce includes small-scale industries, such as food processing, textiles, and furniture production. However, the industrial sector remains more modest compared to other parts of Italy, with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

*On the right:
Olhmann, Pascal (n.d.). Historic center of Lecce, Saint Irene church.*



IRENE

VIRGINI ET

MA

PATRONA



Statistical Indicators

Description of the indicator	2007	2011	2015	2019	Last year available	Territorial level	Type	Note
Tot. Population	94.178	89.615	94.773	93.865	94.434	City	Absolute numbers	Last date (31-3-2024)
Youth population (15-24)	9.734	9.300	8.613	8.298	8.533	City	Absolute numbers	Last year 2023
Youth population (25-29)	6.209	5.626	4.957	4.860	4.419	City	Absolute numbers	Last year 2023
Youth population (30-34)	7.162	6.505	5.703	5.321	4.987	City	Absolute numbers	Last year 2023
Young-age dependency ratio (pop 15< over 15-64 population)*	18,64%	18,31%	19,45%	19,03%	18,48%	City	Ratio *	Last year 2023
Old-age dependency ratio (pop 64+ over 15-64 population)**	30,53%	32,86%	37,05%	38,59%	40,77%	City	Ratio **	Last year 2023
% of foreigners on the total population	4,30%	6,30%	6,50%	7,90%	8,30%	City	%	Last year 2023
% of foreigners on youth population	6,76%	11,17%	11,18%	12,96%	12,29%	City	%	Last year 2023
% of people with tertiary education		21%		23,64%	26,02%	City	%	Last year 2022
% of youth with tertiary education					20,1% (2022)	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2022 (25-39 years old)
% of employed people (15-64)	46,50%	44,20%	43,00%	43,50%	51,80%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of employed youth 15-24 years old	19,50%	17,00%	12,80%	13,00%	17,80%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of employed youth 25-34 years old	56,10%	51,80%	47,70%	42,10%	54,70%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of unemployed people (15-74)	14,70%	15,60%	22,10%	17,50%	10,70%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of unemployed youth 15-24 years old	39,10%	38,10%	55,40%	41,30%	24,60%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of unemployed youth 25-34 years old	20,60%	20,00%	26,90%	26,00%	15,40%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% NEET among youth		14.5%		26,80%	24,30%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2022
% of school drop-outs among youth	25,00%	19%	16,70%	17,90%	15,60%	Region (NUTS 2)	%	Last year 2020
GDP per person	14.448.3	13.862.8	14.401.8	15.711.8	16.528.9	Province (NUTS 3)	Currency	Last year 2021
Average income per household	51687,7 (2008)	52.211	52.584,7	55.425,8	60.148,6	Region (NUTS 2)	Currency	Last year 2022
Housing market price per sq	877,98	1.600,00	1.350,00	1.450,00	1.400,00	Province (NUTS 3)	Currency	Last year 2023

Description of the indicator	2007	2011	2015	2019	Last year available	Territorial level	Type	Note
Distribution of employment by sector:				2020		Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2021
- Agriculture/mining (primary)			9,91%	7,89%	7,81%			
- Construction			8,25%	8,37%	8,64%			
- Manufacturing			10,27%	10,64%	10,50%			
- Services			71,57%	73,10%	73,05%			
Available beds for tourists in the City	7.344	9.199	10.046	10.612	12.501	City	Number	Last year 2023
Universities in the City	2	2	2	2	2	City	Number	
Post-secondary non-tertiary centres						City	Number	
Secondary / Upper secondary schools			49	45	45	City	Number	Last year 2024
Unemployment benefits received by people looking for work					61.606	Province (NUTS 3)	Number of beneficiaries	Last year 2023
Activation/support measures received by people looking for work						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Incentives for Start-Up and/or support for self-employment						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Rent benefits for youth						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Living benefits for youth						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Social housing units					608	City	Number	Last year 2024
Take-up rates of children 0-2 in Early Childhood Education and Care Services			33,6% (2016)	36,2% (2020)	35%	Province (NUTS 3)	Rate	Last year 2022
Average age of leaving the parental home			29,85	30,10	26,35	Country	Age	Last year 2022
Average age of having the first child	30,15	30,73	31,15	31,48	31,98	Province (NUTS 3)	Age	Last year 2023
Total public expenditure on education	4,40%	4,10%	4,00%	3,90%	4,10%	Country	% of GDP	Last year 2021
Expenditure in active labour market policies		0,31%	0,42%	0,21%	0,22%	Country	% of GDP	Last year 2020
Expenditure in start-up incentives						Country	% of GDP	
Expenditure in youth policies	0,01%	0,001%	0,0003%	0,002%	0,003%	Country	% of GDP	Last year 2023

Young people

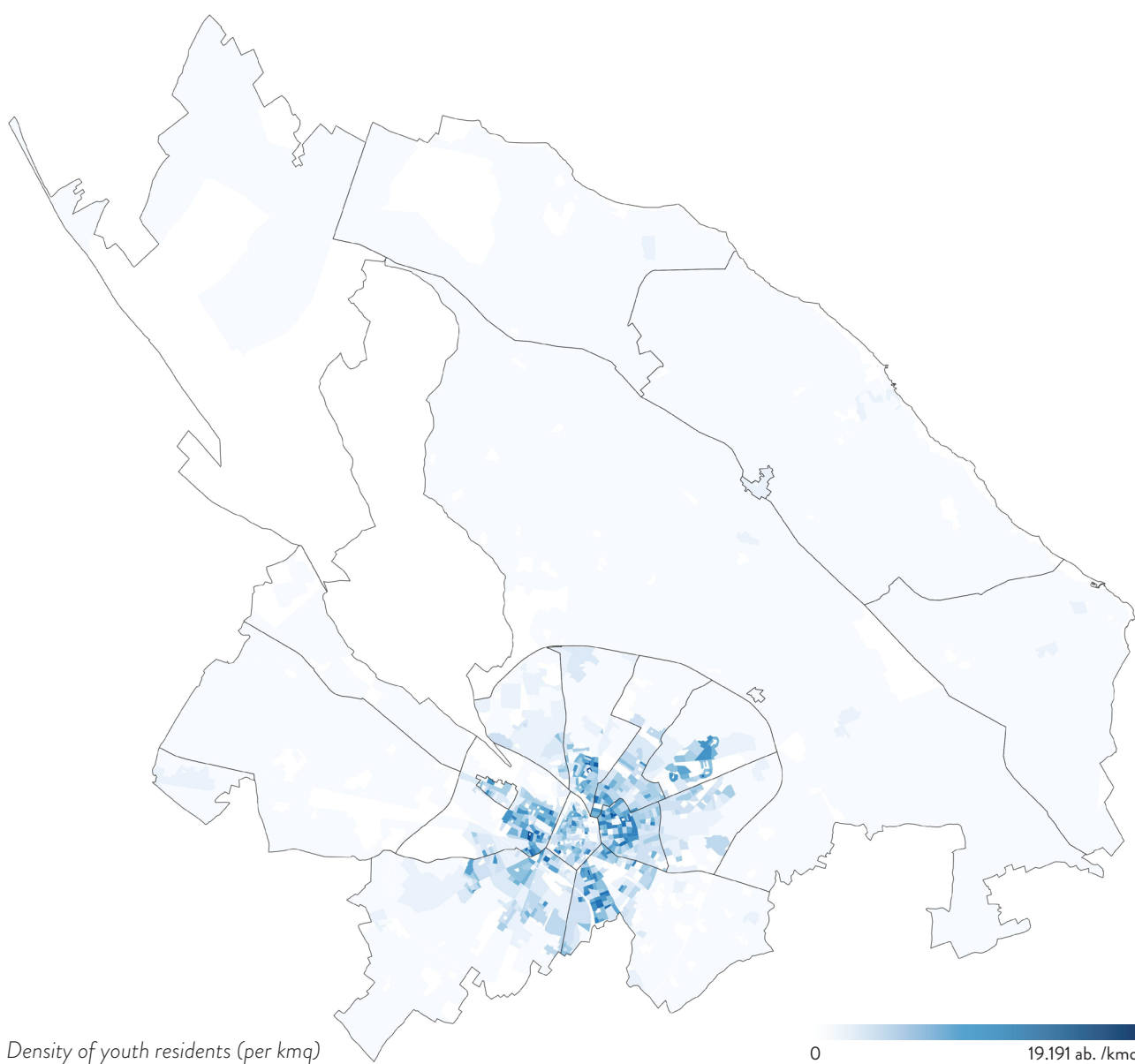
Among the cities analysed in this work, Lecce is the city with the smallest percentage of young people: around 18,99% of 94.434 inhabitants (ISTAT, 2023).

Most of young people concentrate in the urban centre, in proximity of the historical centre and in peripheral areas.

The neighbourhood with the highest concentration of young people are Rudiae - San Pio in the north west, Santa Rosa in the north, Mazzini in the east and Leuca in the southside of the city.

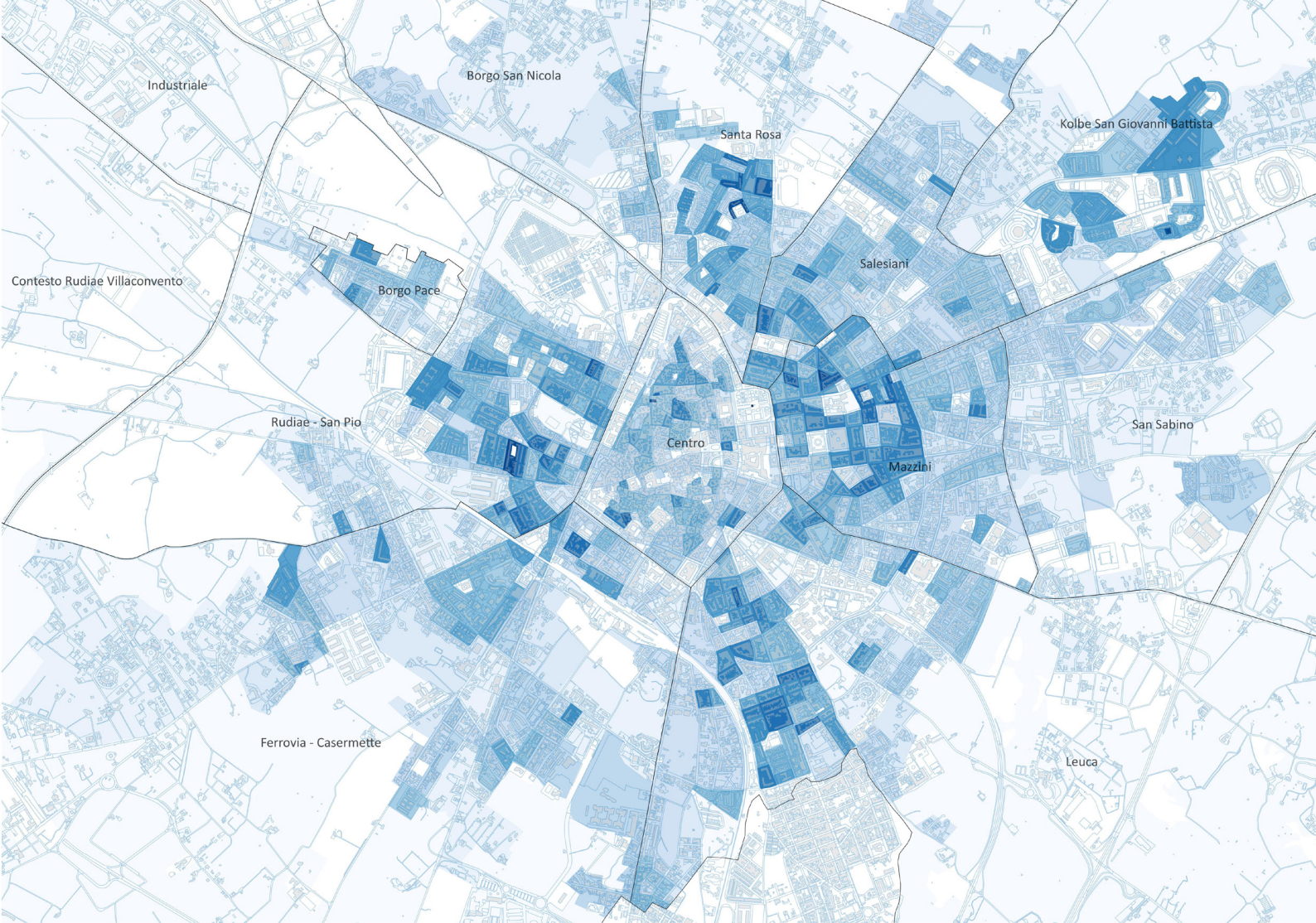
The overall population of the city remained the same since 2007, with a temporary shrinking around 2011.

Nevertheless, the young residents have decreased by almost 25% (more than 5.000 units).



Density of youth residents (per kmq)

0 19.191 ab. /kmq



At province level in 2023 Lecce was one of the most critical provinces in Italy in terms of NEETS (87th out of 107 provinces with 24.3% of NEETS among young people) (IISole24ore, n.d.a).

Lecce is also one of the worst provinces in terms of quality of life for young people (92 out of 107 provinces (Il Sole 24 Ore, 2024a).

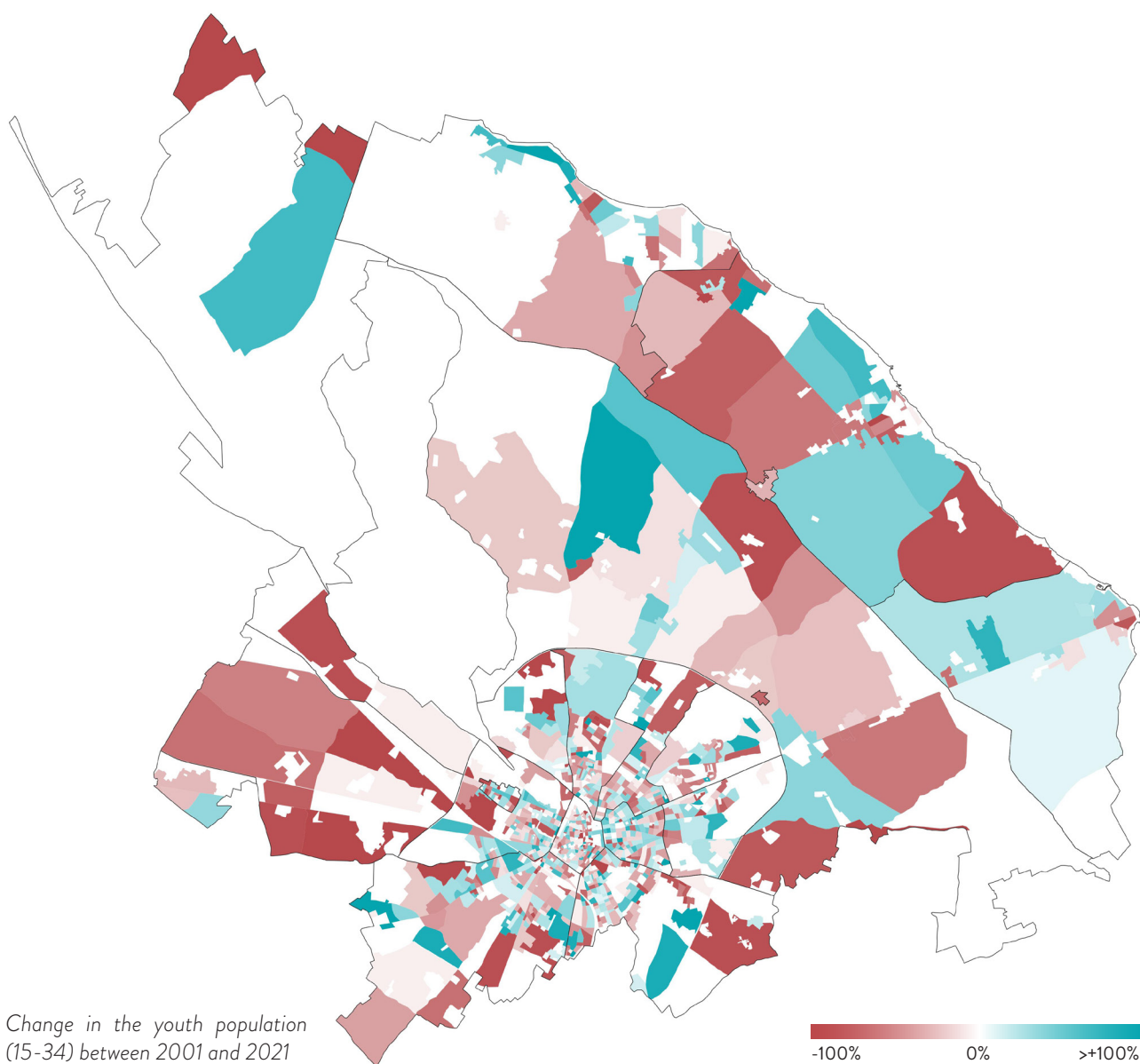
In particular the most critical data are the shrinking of young people population (-0.8% in 4 years), the average age to have the first child (32,9 years), the number of young people with university degrees (-7,1% compared to the national average), young people disoccupation (17,9%) and the presence of sport infrastructure.

On the other side some positive data for the province of Lecce are the number of marriages, the presence of bars and night life activities, the average rent for houses in semi central locations and the youth entrepreneurship. In particular Lecce is one of the best provinces in Italy in terms of youth-led businesses (9,4% of all businesses (Ibid.).

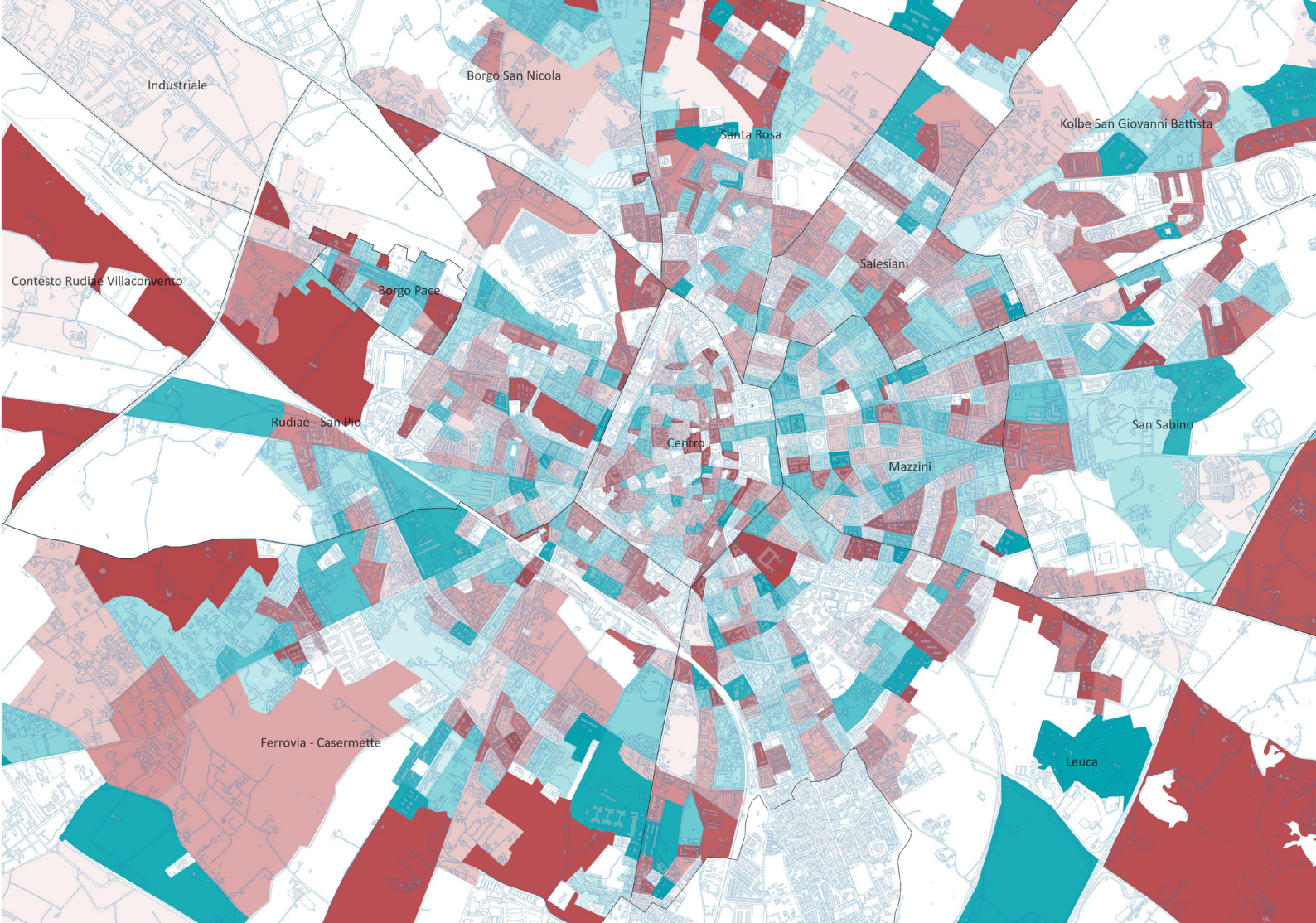
Young people's change in time

As we said before, the young residents in Lecce have decreased by almost 25% (more than 5.000 units). since 2007, leading Lecce to be the least young city in the report.

From the maps elaborated it can be observed that the exodus of young people concentrated in the historic center, in the rural areas in the west, in the fractions such as Borgo Piave, Frigole, Villa Convento, in Santa Rosa, Salesiani, San Pio and in most of Kolbe San Giovanni Battista neighbourhood.



Change in the youth population (15-34) between 2001 and 2021



Bringing back young people in Lecce means addressing multiple questions. Considering the elaborations made by IISole24Ore, the province of Lecce performed pretty poorly in terms of average richness and consumption since 1990 (in 2023 Lecce was the 81st province out of 107).

Also the offer of cultural and free time activities was steadily poor since 1991 (in 2023 Lecce was the 81st province out of 107).

In terms of businesses and job opportunities, an important dichotomy can be outlined: the indicator has been particularly low since 1990, since 2019 there has been very positive improvements on the theme, now Lecce performs pretty well in terms of innovative start ups and youth entrepreneurship but performs very poorly in terms of presence of NEETS (IISole24Ore, 2023).

This indicates the need to address youth training and employment questions differently to bridge the gap.

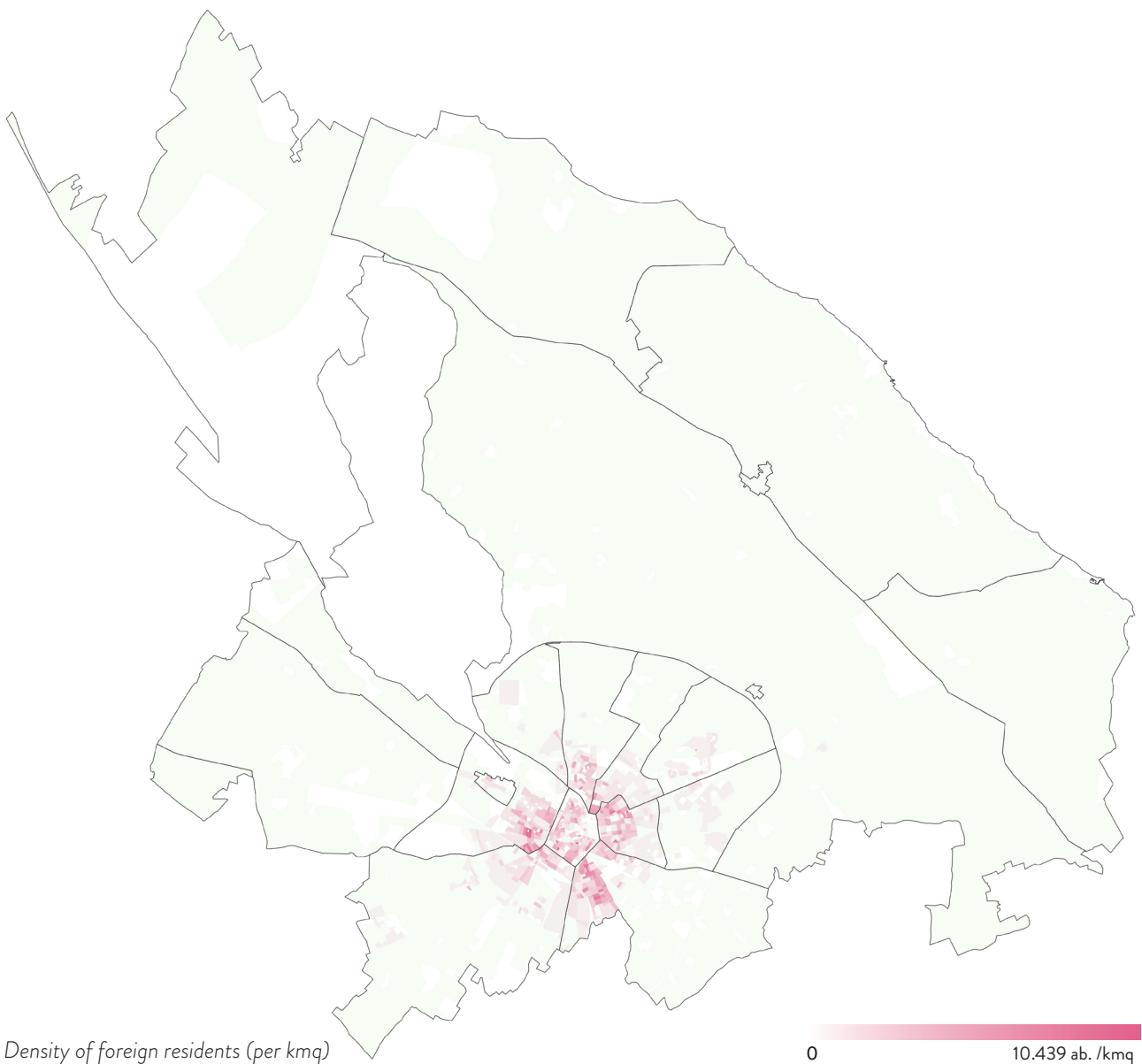
Foreign background people

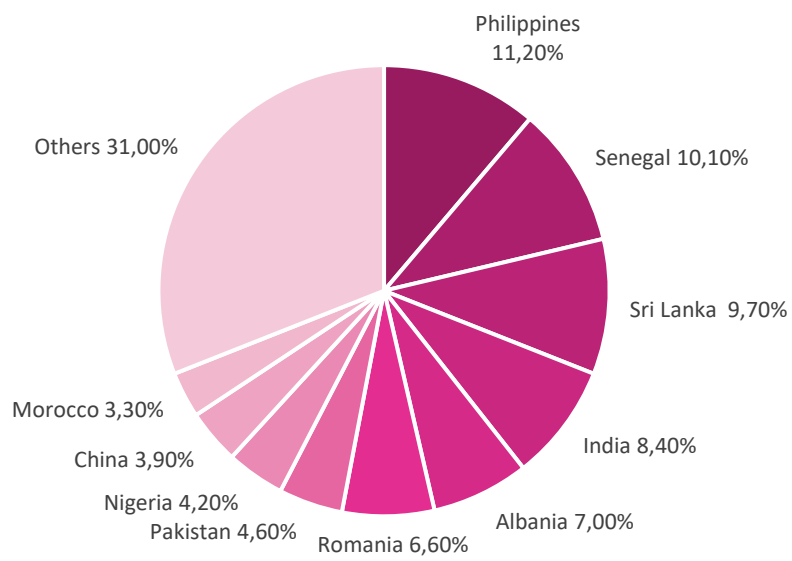
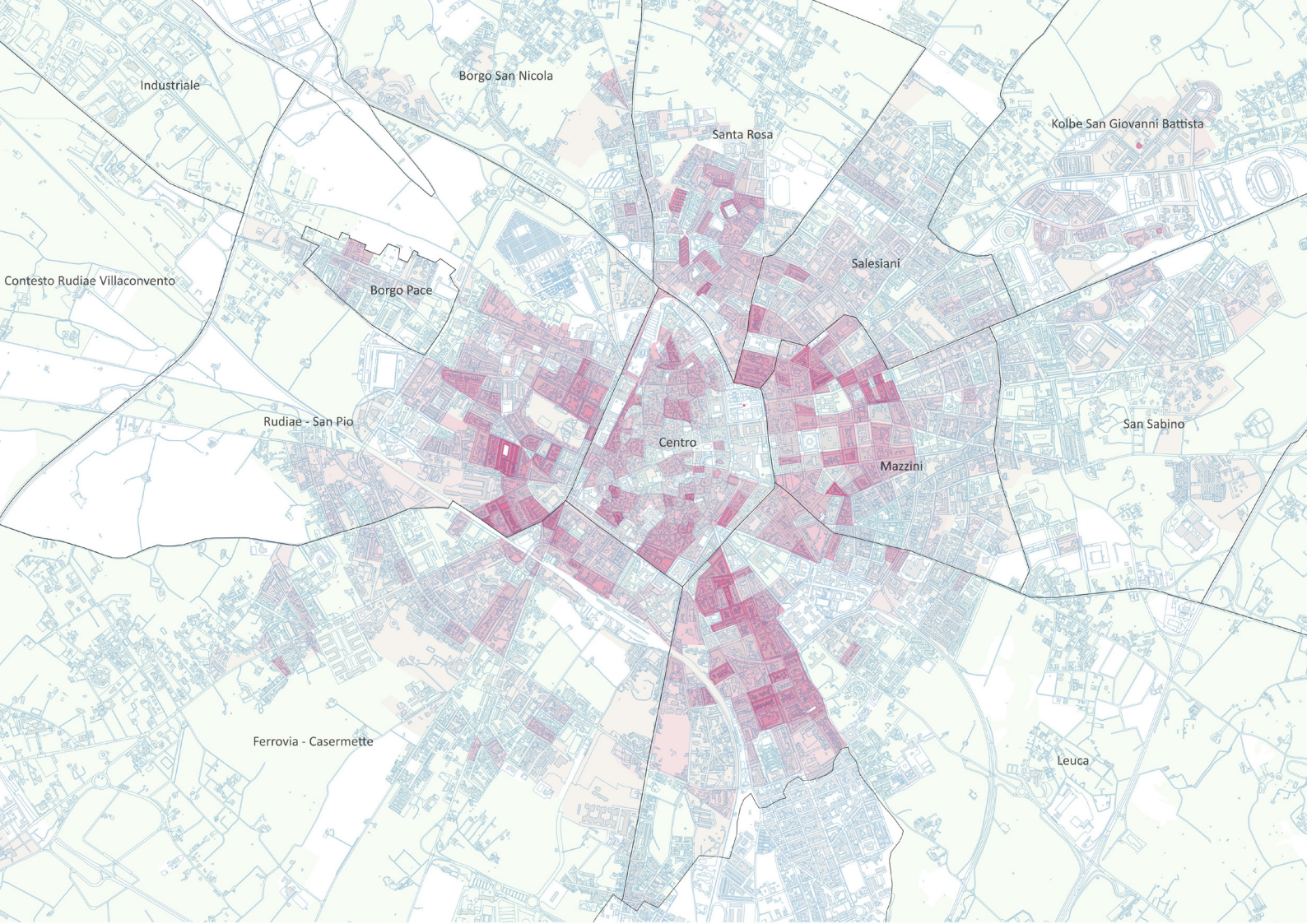
The foreign population of Lecce has doubled since 2007, going from a 4,3% to a 8,3% of the overall population. This data reflects the average composition of the Italian population at national level, but doubles the average regional level (foreign people are the 3.6% of the residents in Apulia). This trend is also consistent in the young population, where foreigners are the 12,29% of the young residents.

The larger foreign communities come from Philippines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, India, Albania, Romania Pakistan, Nigeria, China and Marocco (Tuttitalia.it, 2023).

Foreign people tend to concentrate in the urban center.

The map on the right shows the highest concentrations in the historical center, Rudiae - San Pio in the north west, , Mazzini in the east and Leuca in the southside of the city.



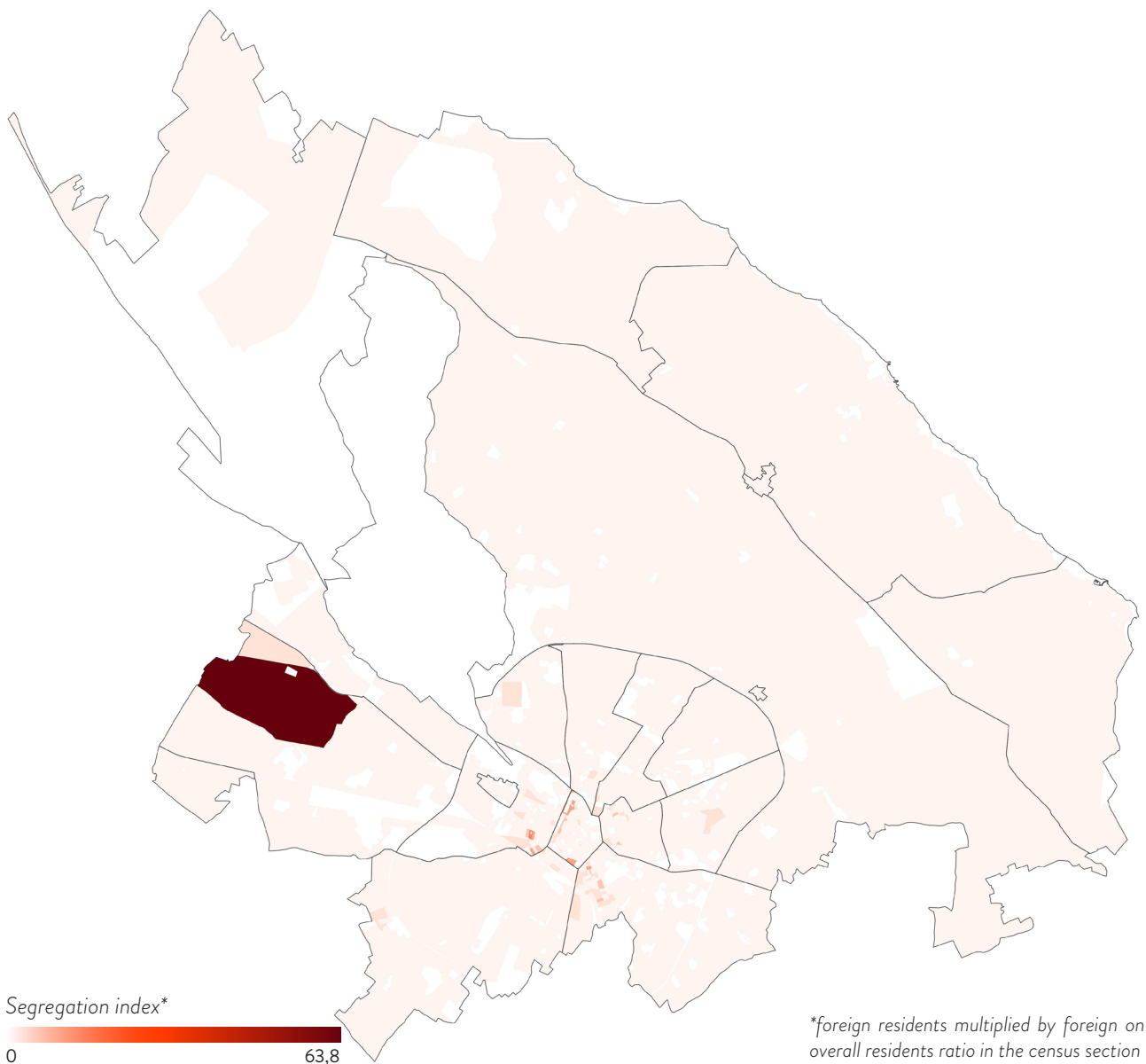


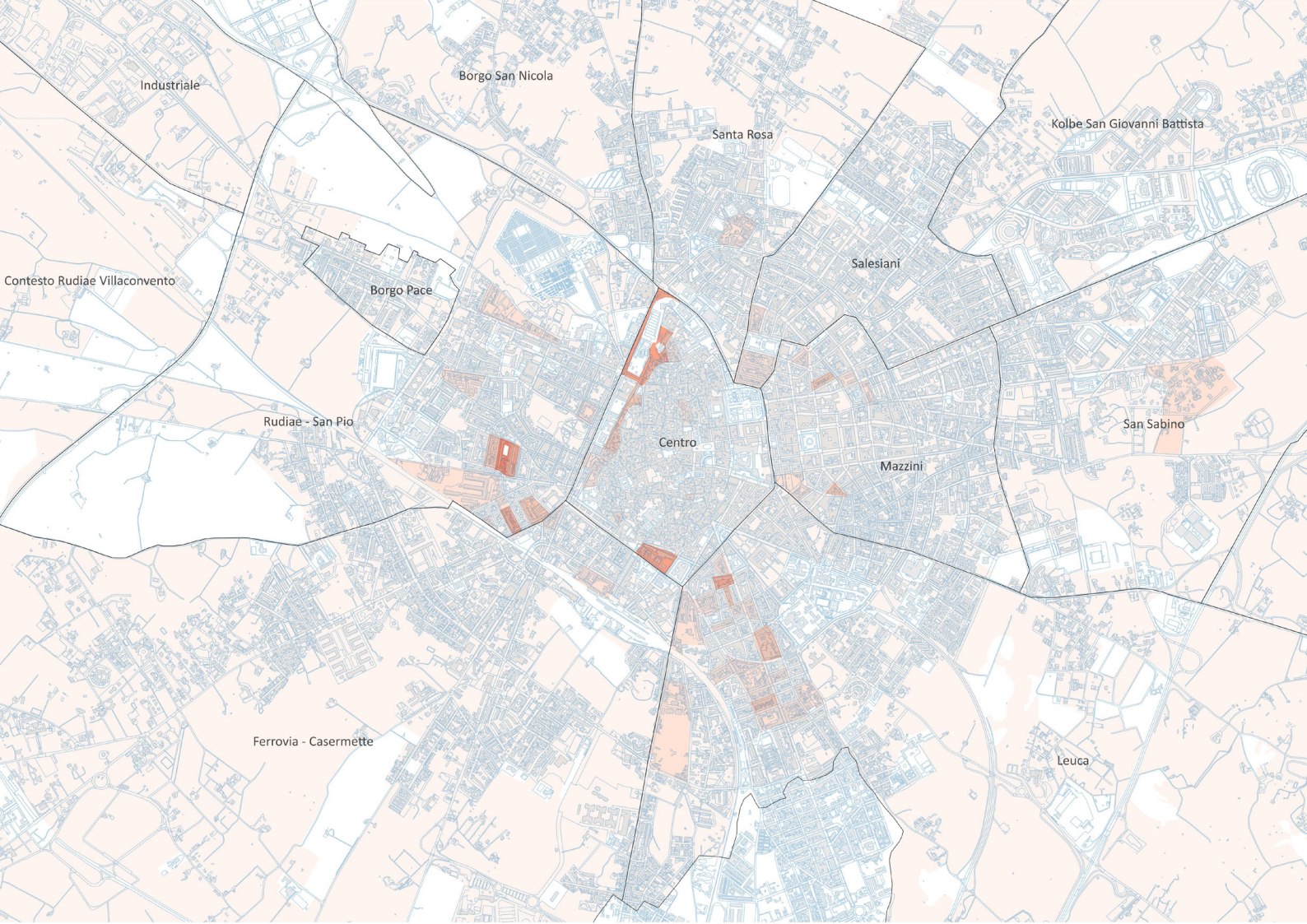
Foreign people segregation

It is a bit inappropriate to talk about foreign people segregation in Lecce. Foreign communities in Lecce have grown significantly, making Lecce as multicultural as the national average level, which is two times higher than the regional average.

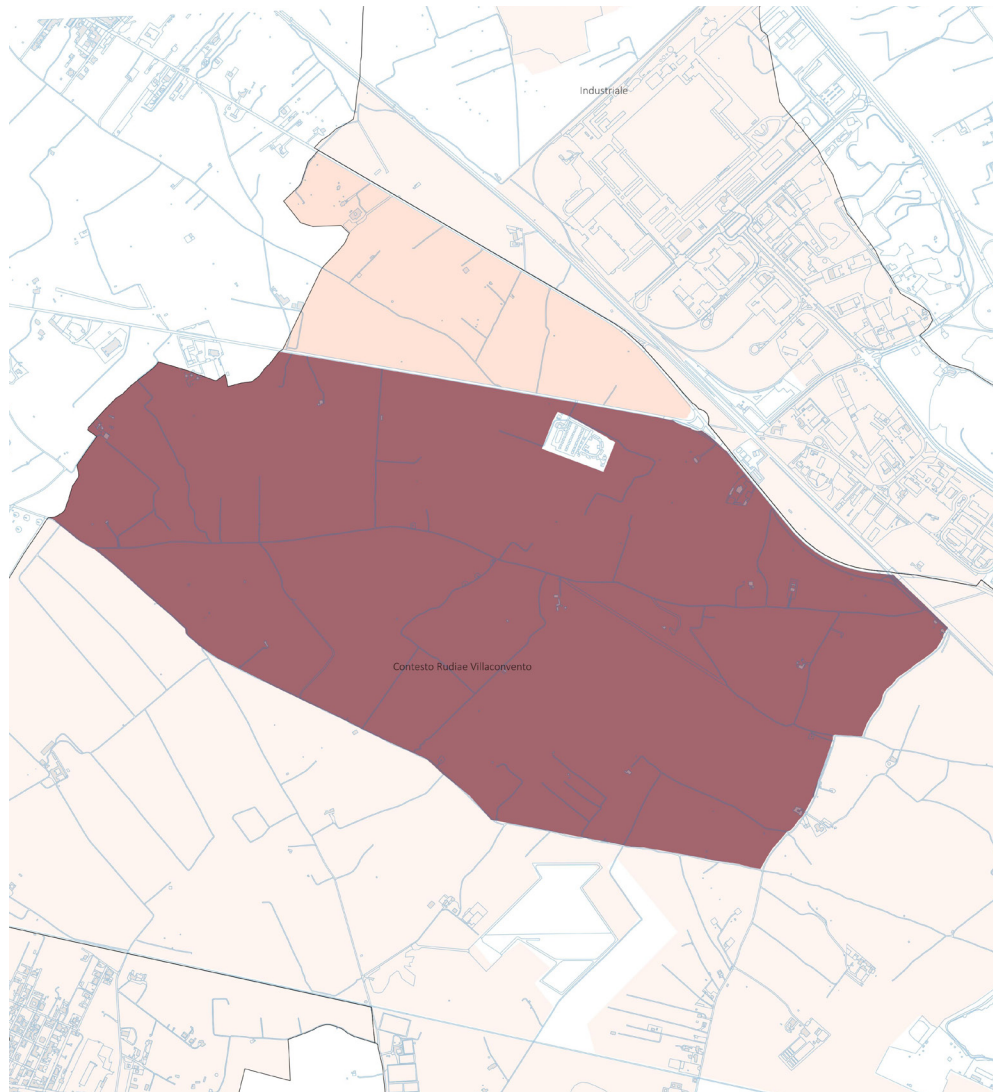
Most of the city census sections do not show significant differences compared to the average demographic distribution of the city.

In the urban center some considerable concentration of foreign background people can be seen in some blocks around the edges of the historic center, in the neighbourhoods of Rudiae San Pio, Mazzini and Leuca.





The most significant phenomena can be observed in a rural area close to the city administrative borders in the north. Between an industrial area, and the neighbor towns of Trepuzzi and Surbo, in this wide rural area, lives a community of 100 foreign residents. (more than 60% of all the residents).



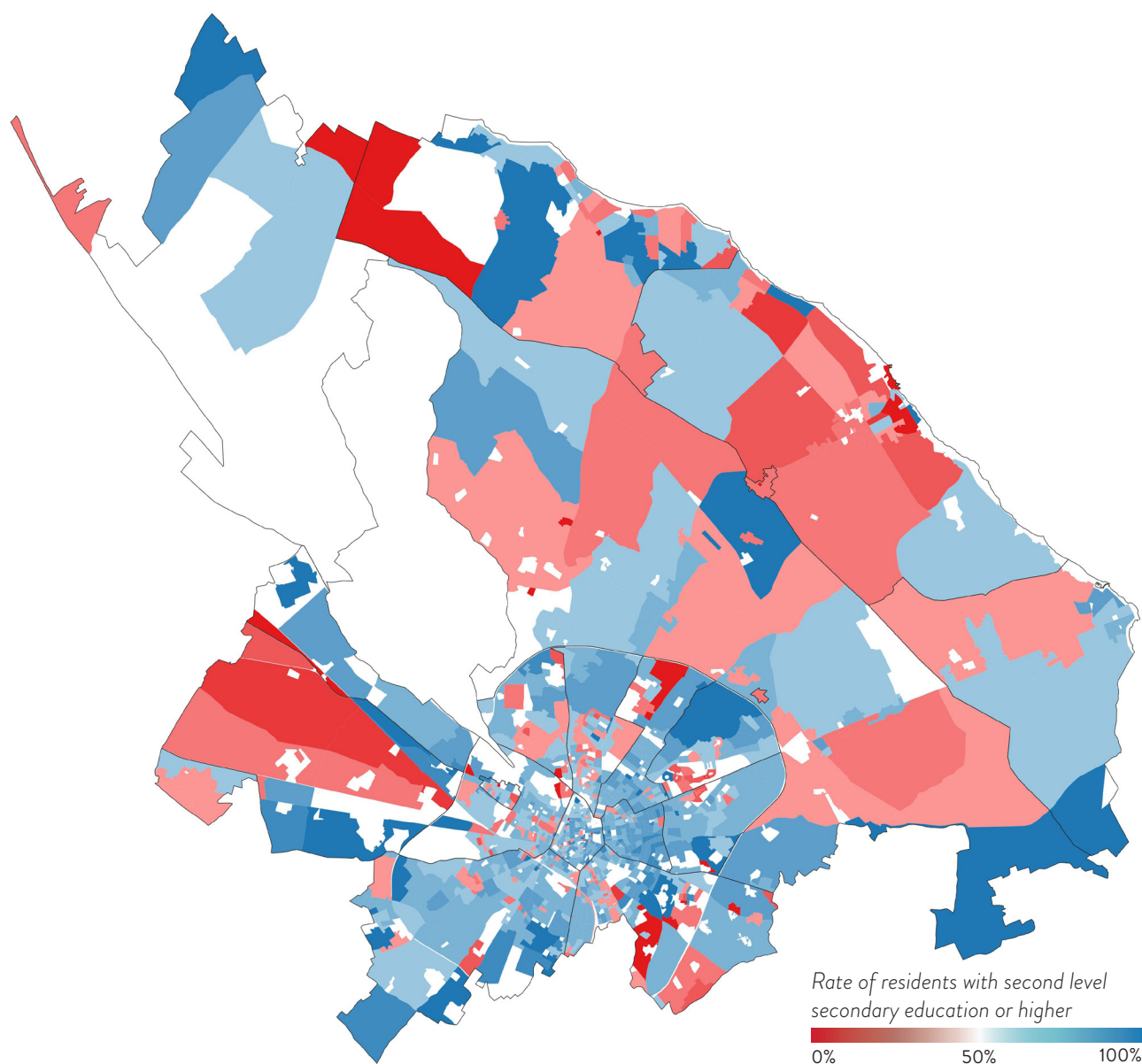
School drop-outs

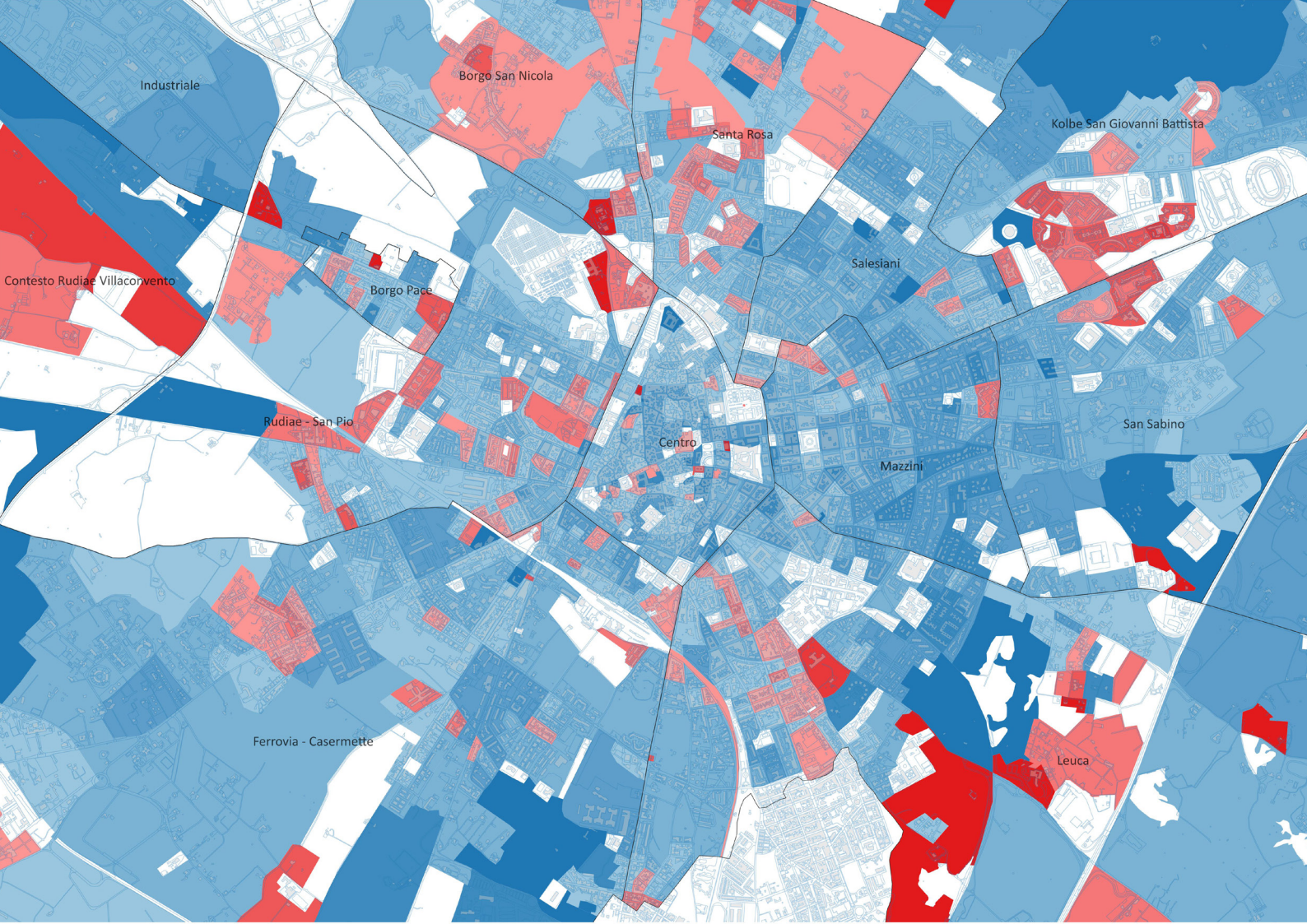
Around 41% of the residents in Lecce hasn't graduated from second grade secondary schools.

This underlines a situation that is better than the regional trend (56%) but still shows some territorial fragilities.

Residents with lower education levels concentrate in rural and costal areas and in some areas of Rudiae San Pio, Borgo San Nicola, Santa Rosa, Kolbe San Giovanni Battista and Leuca.

At province level, the high presence of NEETS and the low number of young people that graduated from university are one of the weakness of the province even though the city hosts Università del Salento, an university campus that served 18.368 students in 2022/2023.





At province level criticalities emerge in terms of take-up rates of children 0-3 in Early Childhood Education and Care Services (71st out of 107 provinces), crimes against minors (73rd out of 107 provinces), school gardens and green spaces for children and adolescents (106th out of 107 provinces).

Also reading index (76th out of 107) and sport index (70th out of 107) and cultural events offer (80th out of 107) is lower than national average.

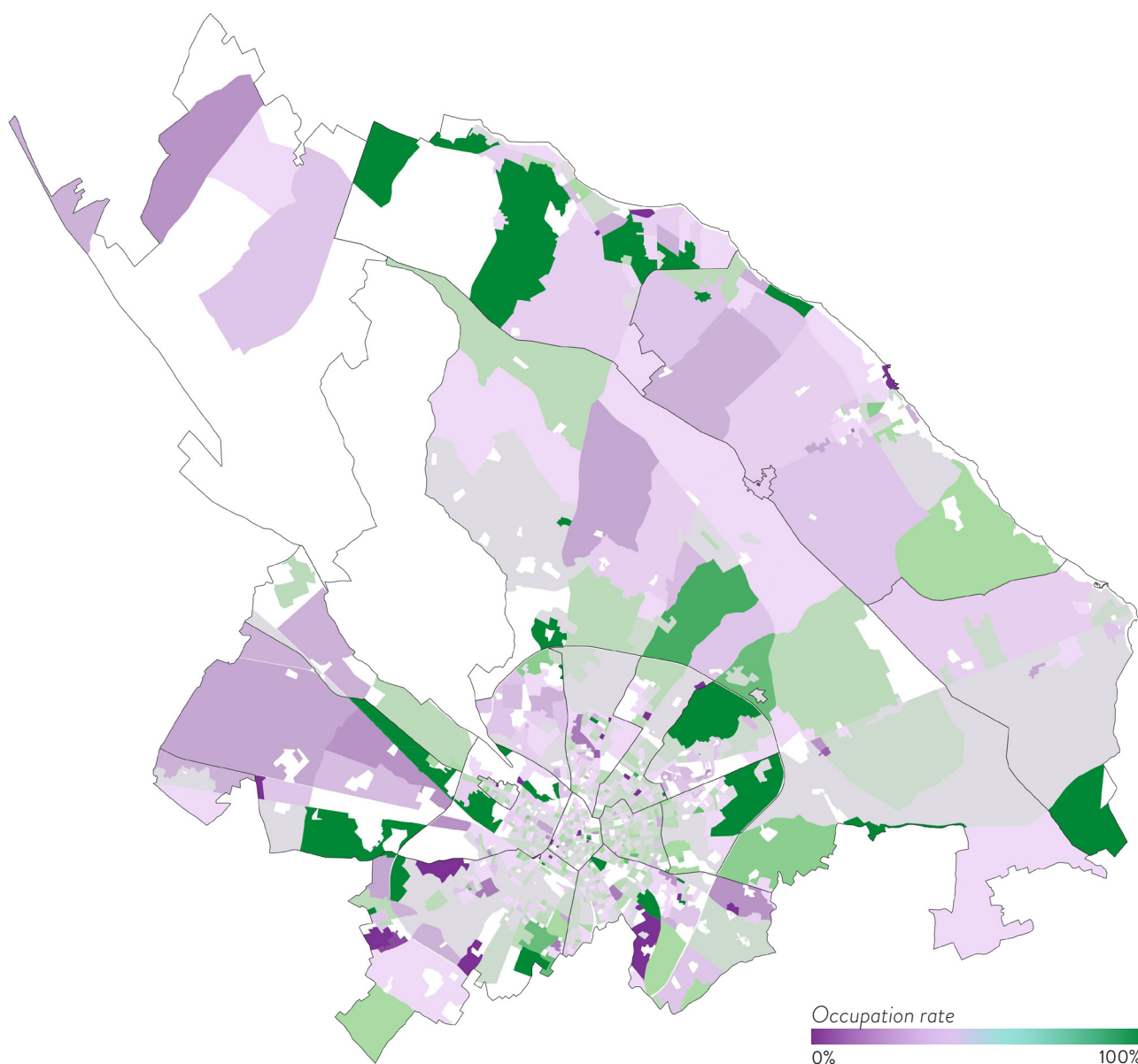
Nevertheless, the province of Lecce distinguished itself in recent years for the activation of PNRR projects in education (28th out of 107 provinces), and for the social spending for families and minors (32nd out of 107 provinces).

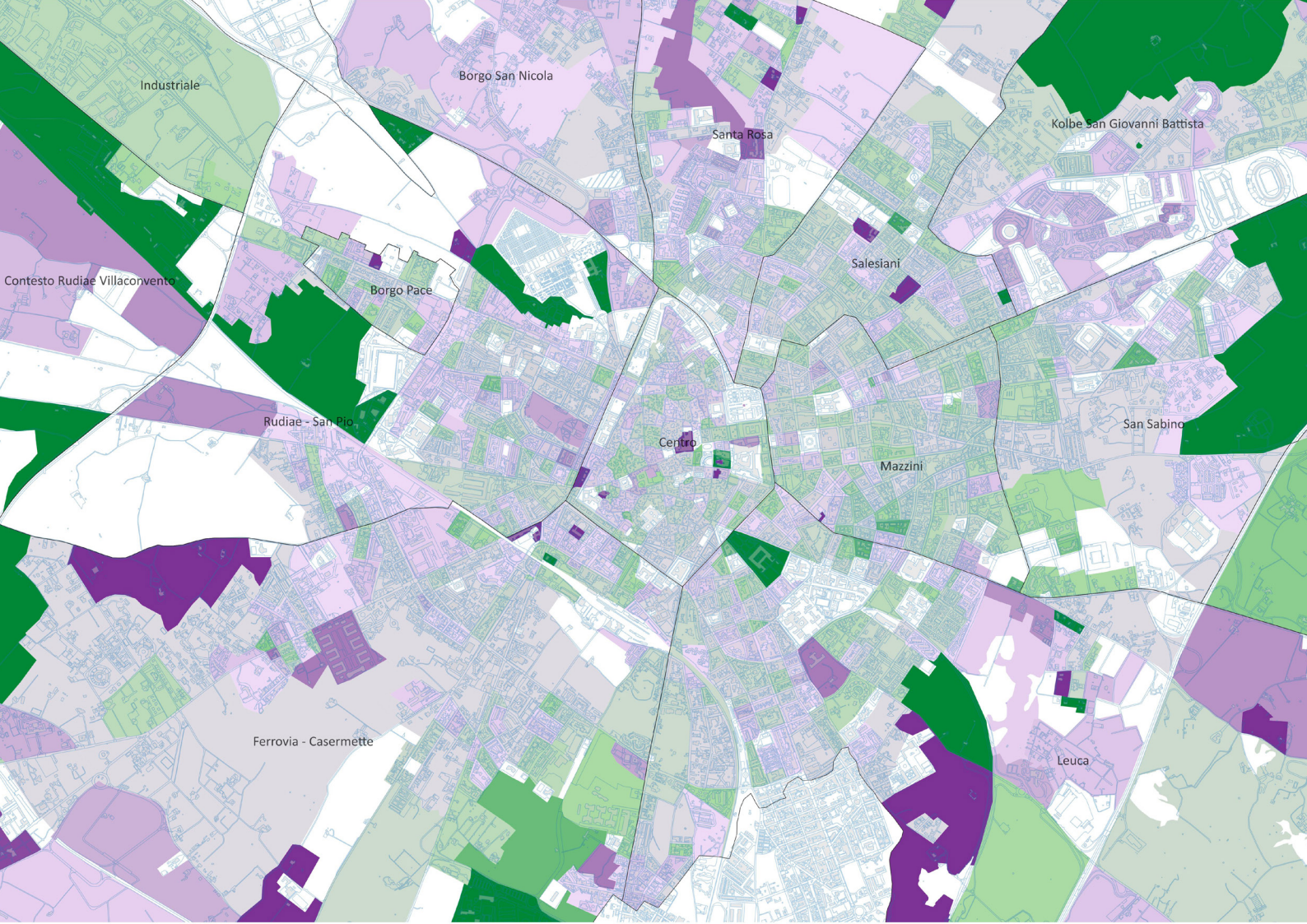
An overall view of the quality of life for children sees the province of Lecce performing to the national standard (55th out of 107), but shows criticalities for the life of young people (97th out of 107) (Il Sole 24 Ore, n.d.a.).

Occupation

In 2021 the occupation level in Lecce was 63,6% which was higher than the national average 59% (ISTAT, 2021a) and also much higher than the regional average 46.7% (ISTAT, n.d.a).

At province level the rate lowers under the national average, services are the main sector of employment (56%), followed by commerce (15,9%), manufacturing (14%), construction (10%) and agriculture and primary activities (5%) (Provincia di Lecce, 2022).





Considering more recent data at province level we see Lecce's economical situation being slightly better than national average.

In 2023 Lecce distinguished itself in terms of number of Innovative Start - ups , young entrepreneurship, with a high number of new established businesses and low number of ceased businesses, a high number of foreign businesses (11,7 out of 100) and a gender pay gap lower than the national average (27% instead of 31,6%) (Il Sole 24 Ore, n.d.a).

On the other hand occupation level is one of the lowest in Italy (ranked 88th out of 107 provinces with 52,8% occupied people), 24,3% of young people are NEETS (87th out of 107 provinces), the percentage of export in the GDP is quite low (5,4% compared to the national average of 33,1%), the percentage of people in continuous training is lower than the national average and accidents at work are higher than average (Ibid.).

YOUTH POLICY SUBSYSTEM

Institutional level

Regional frame and Provincial frame

Before analysing the local youth policy subsystem it is useful to present the Apulian framework for youth policies and the way Lecce and Taranto, which will be analysed later, benefited from regional initiatives.

In 2005 “Bollenti Spiriti” (Hot Spirits) was born, the first Youth Policy program represented by a set of interventions and actions to encourage the participation of young citizens of Puglia in all aspects of active life.

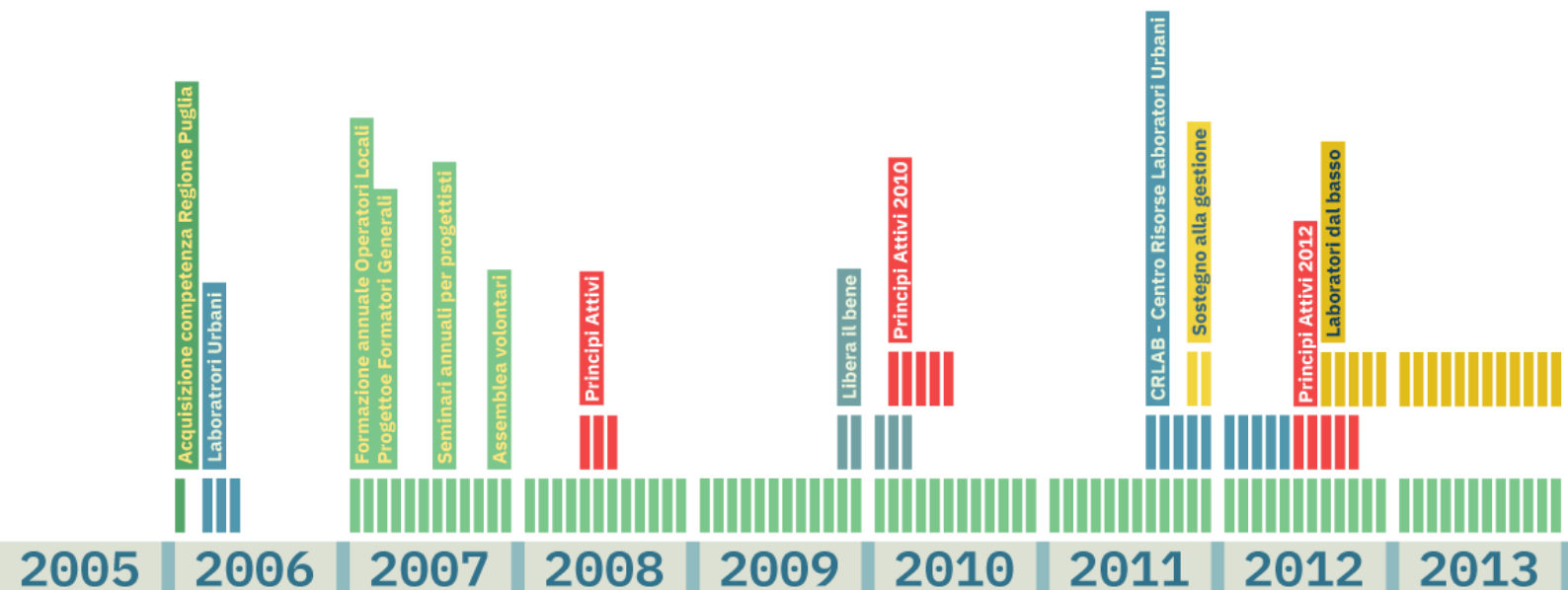
For the first time, the youth population was considered as a powerful resource for regional development and not just as a simple beneficiary of public policies. The measures aimed to enhance the talent, energy and desire to participate of young people.

The Bollenti Spiriti Program included initiatives ranging from youth activation, reuse of unused public spaces to the management of the National Civil Service.

Between 2015 and 2020, with the program “Tutti i giovani sono una risorsa” (All youth are a resource), the Department of Youth Policies promoted a process of evolution of the tools, adapting the measures to the actual needs and the context of reference. This is how PIN - Pugliesi Innovativi (Innovative Apulians), Luoghi Comuni (Common places), Laboratori Urbani in rete (Urban laboratory network) were born and the transition of the Civil Service towards the Universal Civil Service began.

The Regional Council approved with DGR 1388/2020 a new Youth Policy Program, bringing previous experiments to maturity, drawing on virtuous experiences and introducing new activation sectors.

If the Program established the guidelines, the definition of the interventions passed through the participation process “Puglia ti vorrei” (Apulia, I wish you were) which involved young citizens and public and private organizations in discussion meetings around the Program and proposals open



to citizens.

The participatory process concluded with the drafting of a Final Document, which reports the results of the entire process, draws up a manifesto of Apulian youth policies and presents the new interventions for the 2022-2025 period, divided into four thematic areas: Material and immaterial infrastructures, Ideas, Spaces, Civil Engagement (Regione Puglia, n.d.a).

Galattica - Puglia Youth Network is the latest initiative launched by the Puglia Region, managed by the Youth Policies Section and ARTI (Regional Agency for Technology and Innovation). It aims to provide young people in Puglia with services for information, guidance, and support, while promoting peer-to-peer territorial engagement activities within public spaces already dedicated to youth-focused initiatives.

Programs such as Laboratori Urbani , Principi Attivi (Active principles), Libera il Bene (Free the good/asset), Laboratori dal basso (Bottom up Laboratories), La Scuola di Bollenti Spiriti (Hot spirits school), Giovani Innovatori in Azienda (Young innovators in the firm), Mettici le mani (Get your hands on it), PIN - Pugliesi innovativi (Innovative Apulians) , Luoghi Comuni (Common places) and Spazi di Prossimità (Proximity spaces) allowed the birth of hundreds of youth initiatives.

Furthermore, Regione Puglia put efforts in activating networks, that involve the young protagonist of these programs.

These institutionalised networks offered the opportunity for associations from all over the region to come together and build bonds and relationships that improved their work (Sergio, 2024)

At province level, Lecce was always one of the most responsive territories towards these programs, in

quantitative terms. The province hosted 52 out of 148 projects for Laboratori Urbani (Regione Puglia, 2016), 140 out of 517 projects for PIN - Pugliesi Innovativi (Regione Puglia, n.d.b), 38 out of 115 projects for Luoghi Comuni (Regione Puglia, 2024a) and 17 out of 54 projects for Spazi di Prossimità (Regione Puglia, n.d.c).

Taranto on the other hand didn't reply as strongly to regional initiatives, in quantitative terms. The province hosted only 14 out of 148 projects for Laboratori Urbani (Regione Puglia, 2016), only 31 out of 517 projects for PIN - Pugliesi Innovativi (Regione Puglia, n.d.b), only 9 out of 115 projects for Luoghi Comuni (Regione Puglia, 2024a) and only 6 out of 54 projects for Spazi di Prossimità (Regione Puglia, n.d.c).

The province level has played an unusual role in Lecce in recent years.

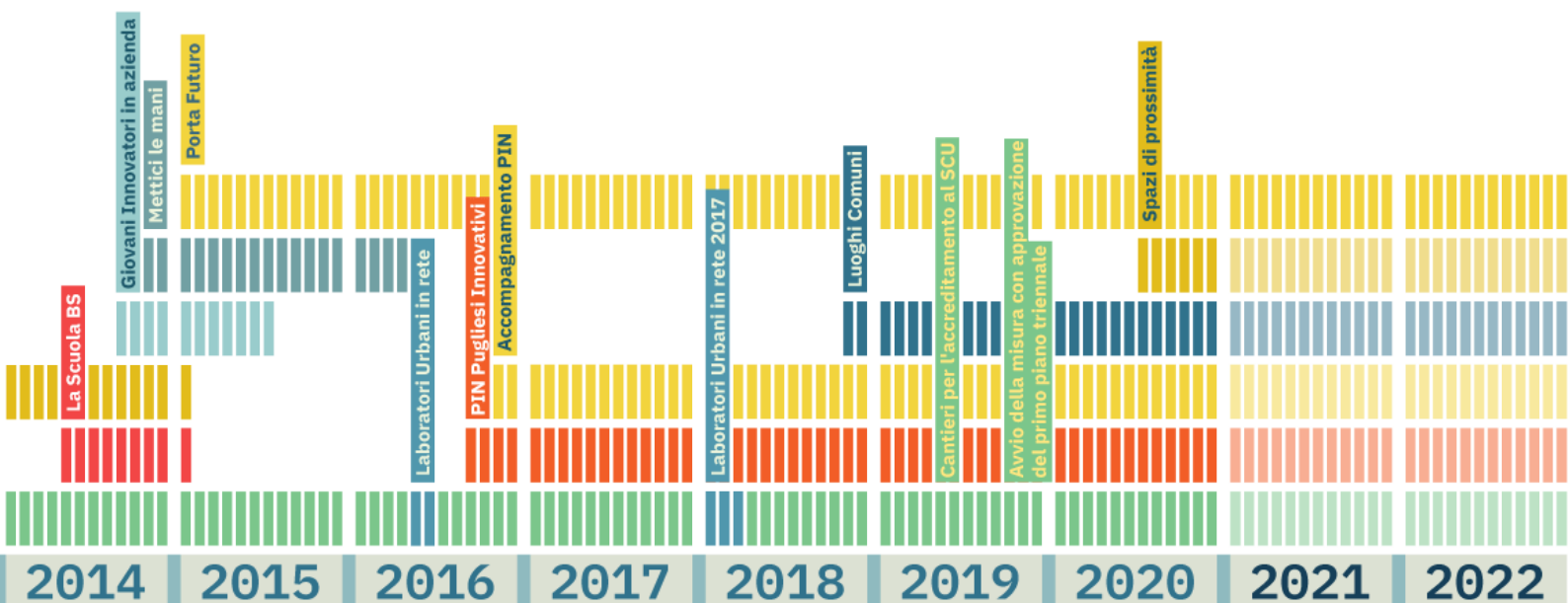
In Italy, Delrio law ((art. 1, co. 51, L. n. 56/2014) redistributed the functions delegated to provincial administration. The functions somehow connected to youth that were left to provincial administrations are the programming of provincial school networks and the control of discrimination in the job market and promotion of equal opportunities, planning and coordination of initiatives aimed at increasing employment and encouraging the matching of labour supply and demand and lastly professional formation functions.

On one hand the province of Lecce tried to exercise its functions by getting involved in tertiary education institutions that work in the fields of tourism, aerospace industry and fashion.

On the other hand the province of Lecce collaborated with local associations and trade unions to co design and implement policies and initiatives and to participate to regional call to actions (Romano, 2024).

Below:

Regione Puglia. (n.d.a). Youth policies in Apulia - Timeline



Municipal frame in charge of youth policies

Youth policies in the Municipality of Lecce are coordinated by the Youth Policies Office, which is part of the Welfare, Housing and Equal Opportunities, Civil Rights, Volunteering, Youth Policies, Active Labour Policies - Area's Social Plan Directorate. The Service promotes protagonism, civic participation, involvement in listening processes of young people aged 14 to 35.

The Councillor responsible for youth policies for the Municipality of Lecce is Maria Gabriella Margiotta. Its mandates are the following: Economic development, Production, artisanal and commercial activities, Relations with the ASI Consortium, Agriculture, Youth policies, Neighbourhoods and participation bodies. (Città di Lecce, 2024a).

In terms of employment policies, the Municipality of Lecce operates through the "Welfare, Housing and Equal Opportunities, Civil Rights, Volunteering, Youth Policies, Active Labour Policies - Area Social Plan" sector, which depends on the councillor Andrea Guido, the councillor in charge of Welfare, Social cohesion, Gender policies, Family policies, Food education, Plans for the elimination of architectural barriers, Reception, Integration, Accessibility, Labour policies, Equal opportunities, Civil rights, Animal protection, City care.

In July 2024, the two councillor have been put in charge of the services previously mentioned by the new mayor, Adriana Poli Bortone.

Poli Bortone had already been elected mayor of Lecce for two consecutive mandates between 1998 and 2007.

By the time this report is being written is quite too early to draw some conclusions about the recently established new municipal council.

Along the project activated by the municipality we find:

The Community Library of the former Augustinian convent will be built in the satellite building of the historic complex. The library was born from a participatory process that involved citizens in raising awareness of the nature of community libraries and the planning of activities. After visiting the building, the Department of Culture of the Municipality of Lecce collected proposals from citizens, associations, bookshops, and businesses. The participation process led the municipal administration to draft the final project, which was then financed by the Puglia Region as part of the "Community Library" call (Città di Lecce, n.d.a)

The "Creative STEM" project, implemented within the framework of the National Digital School Plan Public notice for the creation by state schools and educational institutions of "digital curricula" for the development of digital skills aimed at the development of digital skills and the creation of highly innovative training courses, aimed at developing transversal digital skills capable of accompanying the curricular learning activities of students on the topics of digital and innovation. The project was carried out in collaboration with institutes, bodies, associations and foundations present in the area: ALBA PROJECT S.r.l, the Cultural Association "Tribu' Digitale", the THCS BRINDISI, the ITS Foundation "A. Cuccovillo", Confindustria, the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture of Lecce and Confindustria Lecce, the University of Salento - Department of Innovation Engineering", the Municipality of Lecce and the

Municipality of Martano (Creative STEM,n.d.).

The plan for the educational offer of the Territory, contains free and onerous cultural and educational proposals aimed at the city's schools for the new school year: a range of workshops and activities, which the schools in their autonomy will be able to consult, evaluate and freely choose to include in their programming. The proposals are divided into the following thematic areas: education for peace, legality, human rights and inclusion; promotion of reading and play; enhancement of the historical memory and the city's artistic heritage; enhancement of all expressions of art; education for the environment, environmental sustainability and sustainable mobility; promotion of health, well-being and sports practice; literacy for the prevention of gender discrimination, bullying, cyberbullying, homophobia (Città di Lecce, 2024b).

Thanks to an agreement signed between the University of Salento, A.DI.S.U. Agency for the right to university education - Puglia, the Municipality of Lecce and S.G.M. SpA (local public transport agency), students enrolled at the University of Salento can access public transportations with a 12€ monthly submission (SGM, n.d.).

Relevant non-institutional actors usually involved across all local youth policies

An important role in the urban framework for youth policies in Lecce is played by associations who directly represent the youth world not only as the target population of the policies, but also as policy makers.

An informal network of youth associations is consolidating and growing in the city.

Associations such as DiVagare, Crocevia, Zei Spazio Sociale and 73100gaya consolidated long lasting relationships based on the mutual collaboration in each other initiatives and the sharing of spaces and equipments (Sergio, 2024).

Thanks to the participation to regional call to actions such as Luoghi Comuni and PIN - Pugliesi Innovativi, DiVagare and Crocevia Aps also had the possibility to enter in regional youth associations networks that improves their work.

According to the interviews carried out with DiVagare APS, the municipality supported their work, establishing a solid relationship between them and the previous councillors for youth policies, real estate and public green areas Silvia Miglietta and Rita Miglietta (Ibid.).

By the time this report is being written is still early to reflect on the relationship between the newly established administration and youth associations.

Regarding the relationship with trade unions, DiVagare recently signed a general agreement with CGIL, but have no other collaboration with other trade unions (Ibid.). Furthermore 73100gaya, an associations that supports LGBTQIA+ rights, is collaborating with CGIL and DiVagare, along with other associations, for the design of an anti-discrimination center and also collaborates with the student union UdU, along with a network of seven associations.

The new anti-discrimination center will offer protection and shelter, psychological support, legal support, ensure social mediation, work orientation, housing autonomy orientation and other services. Regarding the

work orientation service, CGIL will act as a 2nd level partner in the project, providing SOL orientation services inside the center (Barletta, 2024). The project supported by the “Realizziamo il cambiamento con il Sud” (Let’s make the change happen with the south) grant, promoted by Fondazione CON IL SUD and ActionAid Italy, through collaboration with the Fondazione Realizza il Cambiamento (Fondazione con il Sud, n.d.).

Role of trade unions in the design and implementation of urban youth policies

In Lecce trade unions contribute to youth policies both through direct partnerships in individual projects, by trying to give stimulus and suggestion towards the policy making and by establishing institutionalised work tables and networks.

Trade Unions in Lecce, in particular CGIL have tried to get involved in the co-design of policy based on Fondo di Sviluppo e Coesione (Development and cohesion fund) , which is the main instrument of the Italian government for financing and implementing policies to reduce economic and social imbalances on the national territory.

There have been several agreements in recent years. The first one in 2016 between CGIL Lecce and the municipality, the second in 2017 was joined by CISL and UIL and a third one in 2022 between CGIL, CISL, UIL, the Province of Lecce and Università del Salento which was oriented to the co-design of policies and projects based both on the FSC and PNRR.

Valentina Fragassi, CGIL Lecce general secretary, clearly stated that the first agreements between the municipality of Lecce and trade unions, were quite not respected, and that the trade unions were hardly ever informed or involved in the design of municipal initiatives and projects (Fragassi, 2024). On the other hand the collaboration with the province of Lecce was deemed more productive by the trade unions, that allowed to produce several call to actions connected to youth employment, such as Punti Cardinali, which will be analysed later. Furthermore an operative unit for youth employment was established, involving relevant local employers (Ibid.).

CGIL Lecce also established a job orientation service called SOL that intercept people looking for a job, in particular young people that enter the job market for the first time. The support services that are implemented are developed through:

- Needs Analysis
- Orientation interviews aimed at creating a personalized professional project
- Assistance in drafting the Curriculum Vitae
- Assistance in finding Employment Opportunities present in the territorial, national and European context
- Assistance in finding Training Opportunities present in the territorial, national and European context
- Assistance on Project Activities and support on measures for self-entrepreneurship (CGIL Lecce, n.d.)

Student unions also play an important role in representing and supporting university students, particularly at the University of Salento. In particular Link and UdU (Unione degli Universitari).

In particular UdU collaborates with CGIL, NIDIL and the job orientation service SOL, and organizes initiatives such as curriculum writing laborato-

ries and orientation services for public administration jobs (Caricato and Spano, 2024).

Remarks on the urban policy subsystem

The urban policy subsystem in Lecce strongly relies on ETS. According to the National third sector registry (RUNTS, 2024) Lecce is the city with the highest concentration of Third sector associations (compared with its population) among the cities analysed in this report.

This vibrant associative background is the starting point, that emerged also from the last 20 years of regional programs for youth policies, is quite proactive in seizing funds, opportunities and call to action that come from outside of the city.

An informal network of association consolidated through the shared experiences of the recent years, and usually come together, also in formal agreements, in order handle specific projects.

Aggregation spaces also play an important role in consolidating the network.

Some of the spaces that must be mentioned are Officine Cantelmo, Parco dei Colori, Crocevia Multicultural center and Zei Social space.

Some of the associations interviewed, such as DiVagare and Gaya73100, stated that there has been dialogue between associations and the municipality with the previous administration. In their opinion, the new one is trying to “catch up” (Sergio, 2024).

Nevertheless, the municipality did not maintain this kind of dialogue with the local CGIL as well.

So the local CGIL tried to maintain an active role in youth initiatives, by participating in the project proposed by local associations, and collaborating with University student unions.

It must be noted that between 2016 and 2022 in the municipality budget there were no resources specifically allocated “ Youth Policies” (Openbilanci,2022).

This doesn't mean that no effort was put by the municipality to produce initiatives for young people, but it surely makes the evaluation of municipality contributions more difficult.

Nonetheless, public private partnerships were fundamental for the reactivation of underused spaces.

PUNTI CARDINALI

Punti Cardinali (Cardinal points) is an innovative initiative by the Agenda for Work of the Puglia Region, designed to foster a culture of career guidance, support sustainable employment, and enhance the quality of employment services for both workers and students at all educational levels. The project aimed to establish an “educational orientation community” that addresses the region’s job market needs by providing high-quality, lifelong career guidance to help bridge the gap between job supply and demand.

Topics

The project focuses on career guidance, envisioned as a tool to support individuals in making decisions during key transitions, whether from education to work, work to education, or between jobs. It plays a crucial role in educating individuals about decision-making, self-awareness, personal strengths, and understanding local opportunities and emerging areas of development. Additionally, it helps prevent school dropout and disengagement, ensuring the best cultural, economic, and social growth opportunities for future generations. The goal is to build an “educational orientation community,” marked by the strong social responsibility of all actors involved in the region’s social, cultural, and economic development, starting with institutional stakeholders.

Beneficiaries - Target group

The project finances the implementation of orientation labs, desks and job days for students of every education level, NEETS, people that receive public economical subsidies and families.

Rete Punti Cardinali. (2023). Punti Cardinali



Contents

Policy goals

The initiative aims to:

- Strengthen local career guidance services, viewed as a continuous “educational process” focused on developing skills, resources, and favourable conditions that empower individuals to guide their own educational and career paths;
- Ensure the centrality of the user, paying close attention to key moments when they must make decisions and manage transitions;
- Facilitate broad and structured access to information and tools provided by the Region and networks of service providers;
- Strengthen and promote the dissemination of territorial networks that offer career guidance services and activities;
- Develop new tools and enhance existing ones;
- Directly support career guidance activities and the development of common operational tools;
- Advance the educational guidance process within the education, training, and employment system.

Policy instruments

The interventions envisaged by the call concern:

Orientation Labs: Educational, experiential, or narrative workshops, utilizing various techniques such as writing, verbal communication, visual arts, creative, or digital media;

In-person group activities, designed for homogeneous target audiences, conducted through the above-mentioned methods.

These activities can be aimed at:

- Providing orientation support to help children make informed and responsible decisions;
- Offering knowledge and guidance to assist in continuing educational pathways;
- Offering insight and practical guidance on the national and regional systems of employment services, active labour market policies, and both public and private employment services in the region, as well as national and regional incentives for starting salaried or self-employment;
- Providing information and practical guidance on digital citizenship services, necessary for matching job and training supply and demand.

Job Days: A one-day event lasting 6 hours, aimed at providing participants with information on:

- The latest trends in the job market;

- Emerging employment sectors;
- Regional public and private employment services;
- Workforce needs of companies (including company presentations and open positions);
- Digital recruiting methods (such as LinkedIn and inPA.gov).

Job Days featured the active involvement of labour market stakeholders and the participation of qualified speakers.

Orientation Desks: A career guidance desk designed to effectively address the evolving labour market and assist citizens.

They are spaces where education, training, and employment are interconnected to meet the citizen’s needs for understanding the modern world of work; Furthermore, they serve as welcoming information and guidance point, where individuals can seek advice and clarification to receive support in making informed decisions aligned with their skills, abilities, and professional potential.

Expected results

The expected results can be summarized in the following points:

- create orientation hubs for training and employment.
- target local entities to guide citizens toward suitable career paths that match their skills and needs.
- serve as a network-building platform that strengthens employment services and enhances the ability to address local needs.

Achieved results

At regional level, the initiative has generated considerable interest and widespread participation, as evidenced by the approval of funding for 165 project proposals, spread across the six provinces of Puglia, with a total budget of around 15 million Euros. In total, 3.000 project activities have been scheduled, involving 30.000 participants and 1.000 partners, including primarily businesses, Third Sector organizations, vocational training centers, and educational institutions (Tecnostuttura, 2023).

Nature of policy change

Punti Cardinali can represent a model of orientation for education and employment marked by greater integration among local stakeholders, increased accessibility and inclusion, a clear connection to the local area through participation networks.

It helped the diffusion of local orientation desks, allowing many communities in the province of Lecce

to have a local reference point for education and job market orientation.

Policy networks

From the point of view of the policy network, Punti Cardinali gives a pivotal role to public administrations. Municipalities, Provinces and the Metropolitan Cities are the actors that are allowed to propose initiatives. They need to involve at least two local partners, one of which must be an accredited employment agency or an Employment Center.

The results of Punti Cardinali call were quite heterogeneous. Some main network emerged from the call: a first one guided by the municipality of Lecce, a second line up guided by a coalition of 9 municipalities in the province along with Aforisma School of Management, and a third one guided by the Province of Lecce. Other municipalities participated individually to the call. Overall, 52 out of 96 municipalities in the provinces, applied to the call (Leccesette, 2023).

“O.L.T.R.E. - Orientamento, Lavoro, Training Empowerment” was proposed by the municipality of Lecce. They were able to obtain a 91.000€ financial support

by the region. 60 orientation labs were proposed, along with 8 job days and one orientation desk.

The main partners of the project were The Qube APS, Confcommercio Lecce, Innova.Menti ETS, Aforisma, Tdf Mediterranea, Cooperative association Officine Cantelmo, Ce.F.A.S. – Centro di Formazione ed Alta Specializzazione, Factory 4.0 and Middle School Grado Ascanio Grandi. The activities were mainly carried out in the city of Lecce (Città di Lecce, 2023).

In the province the main Punti Cardinali coalition included Andrano, Castrignano dei Greci, Copertino, Lizzanello, Galatina, Martano, Matino, Soleto and Racale. The scientific direction of the projects was carried out by Aforisma School of Management. An orientation desk was set up in each municipality, 59 orientation labs were carried out and 67 job days involving a network of 27 partners among Schools, training organizations, businesses, and trade associations participated in a grassroots and widespread planning process, sharing their experiences, needs, and expectations (Rete Punti Cardinali, n.d.).

*Punti Cardinali Lecce. (2023).
Startup Weekend at Officine Cantelmo.*



The Province of Lecce has been granted funding for the “Fiera del lavoro 2023” project as part of Punti Cardinali call.

The project involved all 96 municipalities in Salento, with the participation of secondary schools. The wide territorial scope ensures the involvement of both public and private entities, selected through a specific call for proposals, as well as the Regional Agency for Active Labour Policies (ARPAL). Through collaborative planning with ARPAL, they have developed the content for the Orientation Labs, Job Days, and the Orientation Desk, tailoring them to address the actual needs that have emerged.

After two job days in Acaya, the conclusive event of the project were six job days organised in Gallipoli, also involving the local CGIL, CISL and UIL (Cancelli, 2024). After that, an agreement has been signed to create a network born from the activities carried out by the provincial body, CGIL, CISL and UIL within the scope of “Fiera del lavoro 2023” (Redazione Lecceprima, 2024).

In collaboration with the municipal administrations of Campi Salentina and Salice Salentino, CGIL also offered its support to the organisation of the Job Day in Campi Salentina and Lecce, titled “Precarious Work and Career Guidance” and an Orientation Lab in Salice Salentino (SOL CGIL, n.d.).

The actors

Promoter and financier

Participants in the call

Co-designer

Other subjects involved

Remarks and Comments

In Lecce, Punti Cardinali allowed to create an important and well spread network for career orientation in the province of Lecce, with reference points that, if maintained, can help tackle youth unemployment and inequalities among more or less peripheral communities.

The call also highlighted previous criticalities in the actors network and a certain difficulty in involving the overall social dialogue in orientation and job market policies.

Interactions

Every project involved a different network of actors, even if some main actors were involved in several projects.

Public administrations were the central pivot of the network, and worked as coordinators for the initiatives. A main role in providing content and carrying out laboratories, desk activities and job day was given to schools, educational and training entities, local companies and trade unions.

In the city of Lecce, the fracture between the local administration and the local trade unions became quite evident as neither CGIL, CISL or UIL were involved in the municipal initiatives.

Officine Cantelmo, Aforisma, the Qube, Confcommercio and Confartigianato, were the most active associations in the project.

Considering that Lecce is the city with the highest density of ETS among the cities analysed in this report (RUNTS, 2024), the social dialogue and involvement around Punti Cardinali was quite limited.

Initiative promoted by the province of Lecce, were able to involve a wider variety of associations, trade unions and ETS, especially in Acaya (Provincia di Lecce, 2023b) and in Gallipoli (Provincia di Lecce, 2023c).

Regione Puglia - ARPAL Puglia

Municipalities, Provinces and the Metropolitan City
Accredited employment agencies, employment centers, trade unions, Educational Institutions

Universities, Higher Technical Institutes (ITS),
Training Entities, Factories and Co-working spaces,
Community Libraries, local associations

COMUNITÀ ARCOBALENO

One of the most significant examples of the collaboration in the network of local actors for youth initiatives in Lecce is Comunità Arcobaleno (Rainbow community).

Comunità Arcobaleno, promoted by DiVagare APS, is a project that merged in Lecce's youth context, gradually gathering different actors contributions and at the same time contributing to other actors initiatives and became a reference point for Lecce's youth, both socially and physically, with the regeneration of Parco dei Colori (Colour park) in "Borgo Pace" neighbourhood.

Topics

The starting theme of the project was encouraging the active participation of the community in the management of Parco dei Colori, with an approach focused on sustainable development and overcoming all forms of discrimination and social exclusion.

Regione Puglia. (2022). Parco dei Colori.



Beneficiaries - Target group

Luoghi Comuni was aimed at Third Sector Youth Organizations, established and based in Puglia, whose governing bodies are primarily composed of young people up to 35 years old and Municipalities and other public entities that want to make their underutilized assets available for social innovation projects.

The initiatives of the project target different age ranges, but aim at creating an intergenerational community meeting point for the neighbourhood and the city.

Contents

Policy goals

Luoghi Comuni aimed at:

- Creating a shared platform for knowledge about assets available to public institutions, making them immediately accessible.
- Increasing the number of spaces for creativity and learning dedicated to young people in Puglia, and fostering social innovation initiatives.
- Providing municipalities and other public entities with a tool to enhance underutilized spaces, supporting them in the reactivation process.
- Offering young people opportunities for engagement and learning.
- Supporting youth organizations in the Third Sector in reusing and enhancing public spaces, improving territories, and engaging local communities.

Policy instruments

Through mapping underutilized public assets, Luoghi Comuni connects young people and public entities, funding projects aimed at local territories and communities with grants of up to 40.000 Euros.

Funds amounted to 7 million Euros, drawn from the 'Patto per la Puglia' (Deal for Apulia) (FSC -Development and Cohesion Fund 2014-2020) and the 'National Fund for Youth Policies'. To access the funding, Third Sector Youth Organizations commit to structuring social innovation projects based on both the needs of local communities and the public space to be enhanced.

Some of the activities that are carried out in Comunità Arcobaleno are:

- Management of the urban space Parco dei Colori, as an underutilized urban area to be regenerated, in co-design with the Municipality of Lecce
- Playroom

- Training and information events
- Urban agriculture and green management
- A social carpentry workshop
- Social and cultural events
- A community bar

Expected results

The expected results were the promotion of well-being and the generation of social value, encouraging the creation of 'in situ' services, such as the organization of cultural events, tournaments, exhibitions, and art and music days, as well as the creation of services dedicated to children, like summer camps. The Municipality of Lecce aimed to enhance the network of neighbourhood parks, focusing primarily on the regeneration of the suburbs as a strategic direction to create public areas for recreation and socialization. The goal was to reduce pockets of decay and marginalization in the suburbs, promote a new culture of beauty, and provide integrated services that foster youth aggregation and outdoor play for families with children

Achieved results

When considering the project Comunità Arcobaleno, the regional monitoring scheme highlights some very positive outcomes of the project and some criticalities.

Very positive results were achieved in the involvement of the local resources in terms since the youth organization was capable of involving associations and new resources from the territory that commit themselves continuously, both as volunteers and in managing individual activities and initiatives.

DiVagare developed an active partnership network that has expanded beyond the initial definition and now includes both other legal entities and individual clients/suppliers.

The accessibility of the spaces was also deemed very high.

The space offers services to the public continuously and proposes an updated calendar of activities and events on a monthly basis.

The monitoring system highlighted some criticalities in the collaboration and dialogue with the public administration (Luoghi Comuni, n.d.), even if A.Sergio, DiVagare's coordinator, stated in an interview, that the relationship with the administration on charge at the time were solid (Sergio, 2024).

The services offered by the initiative are deemed economically accessible and the associations is able to diversify its revenues (Luoghi Comuni, n.d.). In particular the activities are funded by upper level calls and funds, a bar in Parco dei Colori, accessible participation charges for activities, associate contributes and donations (Sergio, 2024).

Comunità Arcobaleno INFormazione

Comunità Arcobaleno INFormazione (Information) in Lecce aims to combat workplace and socio-cultural discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ community. It includes training cycles for public employees, professionals and employment agencies. Additionally, the project promotes the socio-economic empowerment of LGBTQIA+ individuals through psychological support, job orientation, and internships. It also seeks to establish a network of safe space.

DiVagare APS is the responsible actor for the project, other main social partners include:

- Spazio Sociale Zei Aps
- Salento
- La Terra Oz
- Associazione Di Promozione Sociale 73100
- Gaya
- Arci Cassandra Aps
- Associazione Culturale Transparent
- Alice E Le Altre Ets
- Lea – Liberamente E Apertamente – Odv
- Agedo Lecce

These partners are united in the coordination “Coordinamento Officine Mai +” that promotes civil and social rights in the province of Lecce.

Secondary partners include the municipality and CGIL Lecce and other ETS.

The project was promoted in the “Realizziamo il Cambiamento con il Sud” (Let’s make the change happen in the south) is a project promoted by ActionAid Italia in collaboration with the Fondazione CON IL SUD. It aims to support social change and combat poverty in southern Italy, focusing on six regions: Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Apulia, Sardinia, and Sicily.

The initiative is divided into two main areas of intervention: poverty and rights. In the poverty segment, the goal is to help people escape economic hardship and social exclusion, promote community welfare solutions, and engage vulnerable populations. The rights-focused efforts aim to protect human and civil rights, foster socio-economic empowerment, and address gender-based violence.

This project supports partnerships between at least three non-profit organizations, with available grants ranging from €40.000 to €80.000. The projects typically last between 18 and 24 months, and in the two edition of the call almost €1 million has been allocated to fund these initiatives (ActionAid, 2024a).

The proposal is structured around three key actions:

- Specific training aimed at public offices and professionals in the area to equip them with the tools and methods to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ community in the workplace, cultural, and social spheres. Training was offered to trade unions operators and public offices workers, also through a regional call called “Genere in Comune” (Gender in the municipality) (Barletta, 2024).
- Socio-economic reintegration pathways for LGBTQIA+ individuals at risk of social exclusion. These pathways include psychological, legal, and health support for beneficiaries who will participate in active citizenship, volunteer work, and job orientation projects. The activation of such pathways will allow to locally handle particularly critical cases for people in need that were previously handled by associations in Bari, the capital of the region, which is 160km away from Lecce (Ibid.). The activation of such pathway leads to many different efforts from different actors to come together to offer such a variety of services. For example, CGIL Lecce will collaborate in the job orientation services, by providing access to SOL orientation services in the anti-discrimination center (Ibid.)
- Activation of safe spaces in the area through training for profit and non-profit organizations. This will include the creation and maintenance of an online and offline platform connecting these safe spaces and the organization of awareness and promotional events in the territory.

Nature of policy change

The policy offered services and a reference point in Borgo Pace neighbourhood.

The neighbourhood is going through a regeneration process, thanks to initiatives such as Comunità Arcobaleno, but also other associations' initiatives and public private partnerships that allowed to give back important public spaces to the community such as Koreja theater, Crocevia Multicultural center and an old tobacco factory re-purposed for public uses.

There is also an on going project for the realisation of a rural school (Sergio, 2024).

When interviewed on the project, A. Sergio stated that "Youth policies are not just policies for youth: youth policies are a kind of approach". Coherently with this statement, the initiatives proposed by Comunità Arcobaleno are not always directly aimed at young people, but generate an empowering environment where people of Lecce can connect, learn and take care of each other (Ibid.).

Policy networks

In few years, DiVagare Aps was able to integrate itself into the associational network of Lecce and attract and integrate other associations in the network.

The main partners of Comunità Arcobaleno are Emmanuel foundation, Spazio Sociale Zei, Unica Società Cooperativa Sociale, Cane Educatore 2.0 e Associazione Seraphicus.

The network showed an important degrees of openness. Several informal connections were born from the formal network of the project. This happened both in Lecce and at regional level thanks to Luoghi Comuni platform.

The actors

Promoter and financier

Participants in the call

Co-designer

Other subjects involved

Interactions

As it was previously mentioned the interactions between social actors were both formalized in form of projects and initiatives and informal.

Mutual collaboration and presence in each other's initiatives was remarked by the interviewed associations. The sharing of spaces and equipment is also beneficial to maintain cohesion among the network.

Institutions and trade unions formally support the initiative.

A good feedback was given by the interviewed actors about the previous administration collaboration in the project. The councillors and managers for youth policies, public assets and green were the reference point for the project.

By the time this report is being written it is too early to evaluate contributions from the current administration.

Remarks and Comments

Overall Comunità Arcobaleno can be framed as an example of grass-root initiative in a social context that is getting quite favourable to youth policies.

As shown by the high presence of ETS and the usual reply of the territory to upper level calls, Lecce is one of the territories where social actors are more active in Apulia.

Regione Puglia - ARPAL Puglia

DiVagare Aps and Municipality

Emmanuel foundation, Spazio Sociale Zei, Unica Società Cooperativa Sociale, Cane Educatore 2.0 e Associazione Seraphicus, coordinamento Officine Mai +

CGIL Lecce, other local associations

TARANTO

Taranto is the second city analysed in this report that is located in the Apulia region. It is the third most populous city (around 186.476 residents) in the peninsular south of Italy, after Naples and Bari. Renowned for its rich history, significant naval presence, and strategic port, Taranto has a unique blend of ancient and modern influences.

Taranto is known for its distinctive geography, divided between the old town (Città Vecchia) and the newer city.

Città Vecchia (Old Town) is located on a small island between the Big Sea (Mar Grande) and Little Sea (Mar Piccolo), the old town preserves much of its ancient charm. It has narrow streets, historic churches, and remnants of ancient Greek and medieval architecture.

Taranto's economy combines industry, naval activities, fishing, and agriculture.

Taranto has long been home to a major Italian naval base, which remains a key part of its economy and identity. The city's harbour is strategically significant for Italy's naval and military operations in the Mediterranean.

One of the most defining aspects of Taranto's modern economy is the steelworks, known as ILVA (now re-branded as Acciaierie d'Italia (Italian Steelworks)). It is one of Europe's largest steel plants and has played a central role in local employment but has also been at the heart of environmental and health controversies due to pollution.

Taranto is also famous for its mussels and other seafood harvested from the Mar Piccolo. Additionally, the surrounding Apulian countryside produces olive



oil, wine, and vegetables, contributing to the region's agricultural output.

Although historically overshadowed by its industrial sector, Taranto is also focusing on developing its tourism sector. Attractions include its ancient history, archaeological sites, and beautiful coastal areas.

Taranto faces significant environmental challenges, particularly related to the steel industry. The steelworks had a profound impact on air quality and public health, leading to legal battles, environmental protection efforts, and protests from local residents concerned about high levels of dioxins and other pollutants.

Taranto, is home to several higher education institutions and satellite campuses that provide opportunities for local students such as University of Bari "Aldo

Moro" - Taranto Campus that offers courses in Economics, Law, Environmental sciences, social sciences and education and Polytechnic University of Bari - Taranto Branch that offers engineering programs in mechanical engineering, naval architecture and maritime engineering.

Taranto has faced some decline in recent years due to economic challenges and migration to other regions. The youth population was particularly affected by this phenomenon.

Calabrese. (2021). Taranto's waterfront (Original title: L'opera di Kraser a Taranto.)



Statistical Indicators

Description of the indicator	2007	2011	2015	2019	Last year available	Territorial level	Type	Note
Tot. Population	195.130	199.936	201.100	191.050	186.476	City	Absolute numbers	Last date (31-3-2024)
Youth population (15-24)	23.745	21.723	21.415	19.948	19.496	City	Absolute numbers	Last year 2023
Youth population (25-29)	14.143	11.768	11.270	10.439	9.224	City	Absolute numbers	Last year 2023
Youth population (30-34)	14.848	13.051	11.275	10.163	9.678	City	Absolute numbers	Last year 2023
Young-age dependency ratio (pop 15< over 15-64 population)*	68,00%	66,50%	64,20%	63,20%	62,30%	City	Ratio *	Last year 2023
Old-age dependency ratio (pop 64+ over 15-64 population)**	27,21%	29,17%	34,27%	37,97%	41,41%	City	Ratio **	Last year 2023
% of foreigners on the total population	0,30%	1,20%	1,40%	2,00%	2,60%	City	%	Last year 2023
% of foreigners on youth population	0,39%	1,56%	1,99%	3,82%	4,73%	City	%	Last year 2023
% of people with tertiary education		10,88%		12,44%	14,00%	City	%	Last year 2022
% of youth with tertiary education					13,20%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2022 (25-39 years old)
% of employed people (15-64)	45,30%	44,80%	42,10%	43,20%	43,20%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of employed youth 15-24 years old	19,60%	15,50%	7,90%	11,60%	8,50%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of employed youth	57,40%	55,30%	40,90%	39,60%	40%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of unemployed people (15-74)	10,50%	11,20%	18,80%	15,40%	13,50%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of unemployed youth 15-24 years old	34,70%	33,50%	60,60%	46,60%	54,30%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of unemployed youth 25-34 years old	12,70%	15,50%	27,70%	31,20%	22,50%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% NEET among youth		16,40%		34,40%	31,80%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2022
% of school drop-outs among youth	25,00%	19%	16,70%	17,90%	15,60%	Region (NUTS 2)	%	Last year 2020
GDP per person	15.569,9	16.115,8	15.257,6	16.688,8	18.406,3	Province (NUTS 3)	Currency	Last year 2021
Average income per household	51687,7 (2008)	52.211	52.584,7	55.425,8	60.148,6	Region (NUTS 2)	Currency	Last year 2022
Housing market price per sq	1.032,91	1.800,00	1.400,00	1.150,00	1.100,00	Province (NUTS 3)	Currency	Last year 2023

Description of the indicator	2007	2011	2015	2019	Last year available	Territorial level	Type	Note
Distribution of employment by sector:		2010		2020		Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2021
- Agriculture/mining (primary)		9,75%	11,19%	10,50%	10,12%			
- Construction		4,53%	5,34%	5,03%	5,60%			
- Manufacturing		16,49%	14,70%	14,26%	13,94%			
- Services		56,80%	68,77%	70,21%	70,34%			
Available beds for tourists in the City	2.411	2.253	2.599	3.091	3.703	City	Number	Last year 2023
Universities in the City	4	4	4	4	4	City	Number	
Post-secondary non-tertiary centres						City	Number	
Secondary / Upper secondary schools			63	65	57	City	Number	Last year 2024
Unemployment benefits received by people looking for work					57.990,61	Province (NUTS 3)	Number of beneficiaries	Last year 2023
Activation/support measures received by people looking for work						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Incentives for Start-Up and/or support for self-employment						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Rent benefits for youth						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Living benefits for youth						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Social housing units					4.311	City	Number	Last year 2024
Social housing units					7.251	Province (NUTS 3)	Number	Last year 2024
Take-up rates of children 0-2 in Early Childhood Education and Care Services			17,9% (2016)	19,4% (2020)	18,10%	City	Rate	Last year 2022
Average age of leaving the parental home			29,85	30,10	29,95	Country	Age	Last year 2022
Average age of having the first child	29,27	30,11	30,2	30,79	31,2	Province (NUTS 3)	Age	Last year 2023
Total public expenditure on education	4,40%	4,10%	4,00%	3,90%	4,10%	Country	% of GDP	Last year 2021
Expenditure in active labour market policies		0,31%	0,42%	0,21%	0,22%	Country	% of GDP	Last year 2020
Expenditure in start-up incentives						Country	% of GDP	
Expenditure in youth policies	0,01%	0,001%	0,0003%	0,002%	0,003%	Country	% of GDP	Last year 2023

Young people

Taranto's young people constitute 20,6% of the overall population of the city (186.476 people) (ISTAT, 2023).

A high concentration of young people can be seen both in the north side of Taranto Vecchia, in the Borgo, in Montegranaro, Tre Carrare Battisti and in the Tamburi neighbourhood.

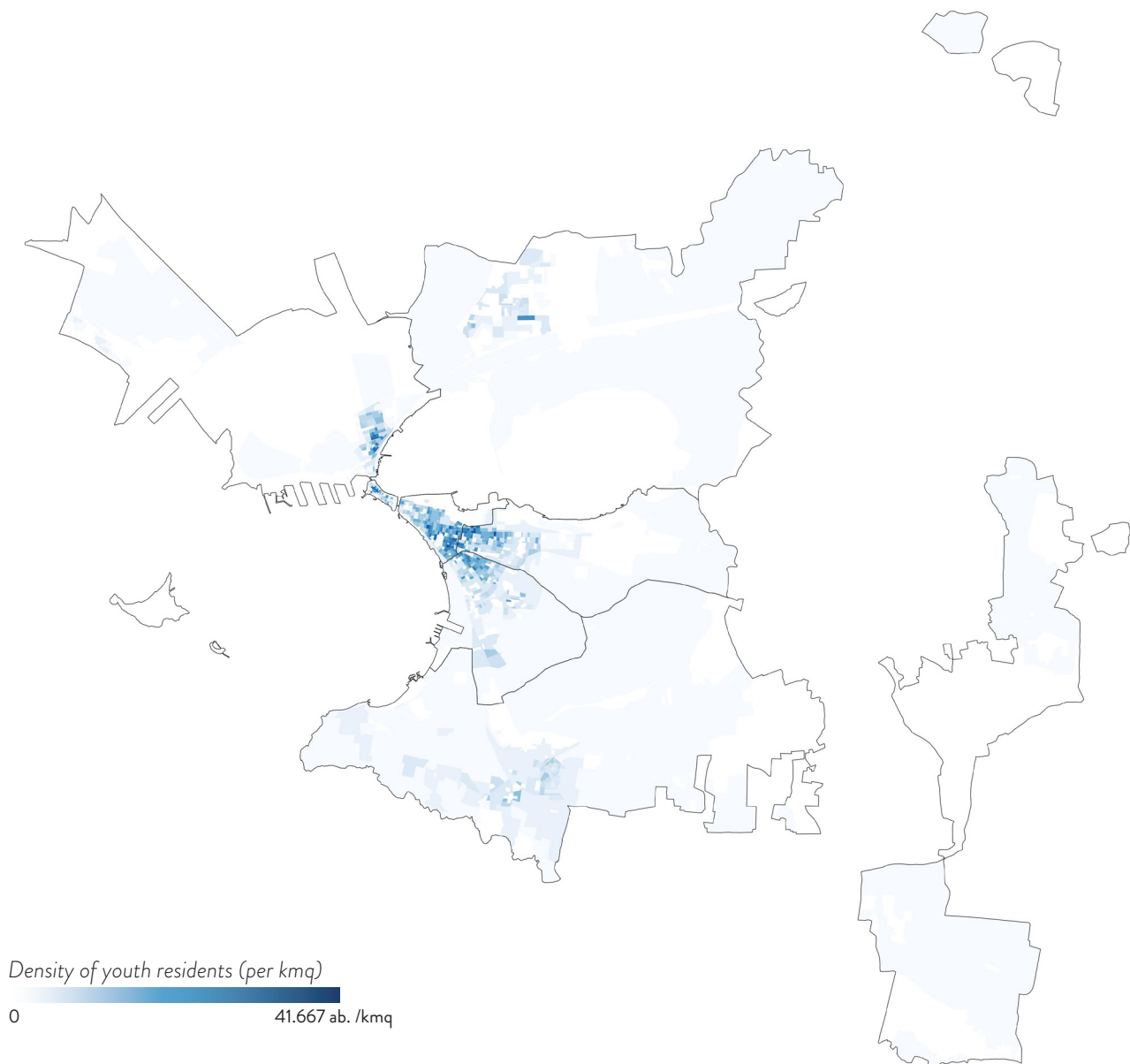
The overall population of the city went down by 4,5 % since 2007, but the decrease in the young population was much more severe losing 27.2% of the residents (14.338 units).

At province level in 2023, Taranto was the most critical province in terms of NEETS among the ones analysed in this report (100th out of 107 provinces with 31,8% of NEETS among young people (IISole24ore, n.d.a)).

Taranto was also deemed the second worst province in Italy in terms of quality of life for young people (106 th out of 107 provinces (Il Sole 24 Ore, 2024a).

In particular the most critical data are the shrinking of young population (-1.1% in 4 years), the average age to have the first child (32,9 years), the percentage of young people with university degrees which is the absolute lowest in Italy (almost 50% lower than the national average), young people disoccupation (31,9%) which is the third highest percentage in Italy and the stabilisation of job positions.

On the other side some positive data for the province of Taranto are the medium age to have a first child, the average rent for houses in semi central locations and the youth entrepreneurship which is slightly more active than the national average (Ibid.).



Tamburi-Lido Azzurro

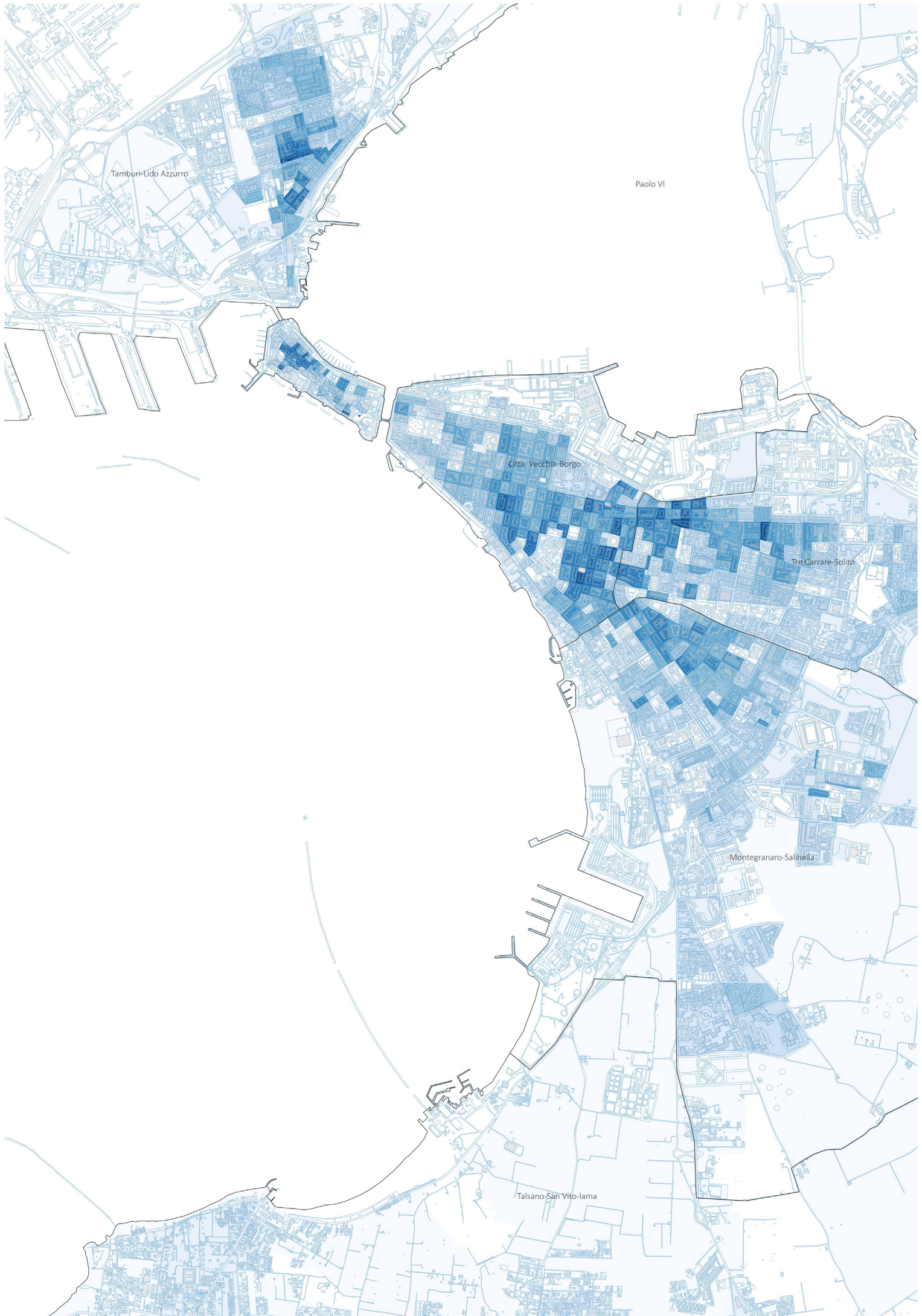
Paolo VI

Città Vecchia-Borgo

Tra Carrare-Solito

Montegranaro-Salinella

Talsano-San Vito-lama



Young people's change in time

As we said before, Taranto suffered an important young people shrinkage in the last 20 years.

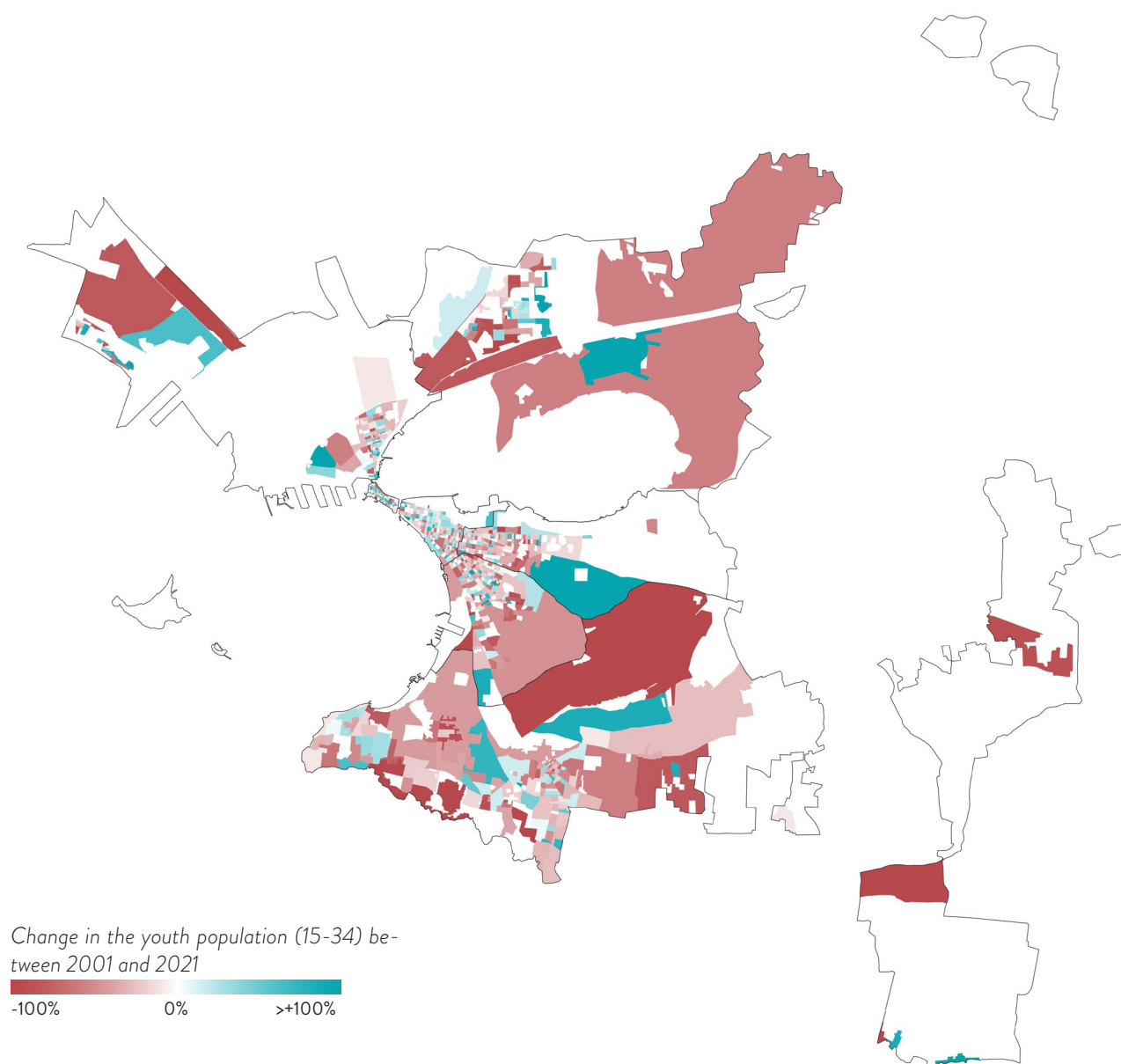
The elaborations allow us to understand how this phenomena affected each neighbourhood.

The most affected neighbourhood are in the south pheriphery of Taranto. Areas such as Lama, Talsano, San Vito lost about 1.700 youth and Salinella and Montegranaro neighbourhood lost about 1.300. 1.100 youth also left the Tre Carrare and Solito neighbourhood in the east of the city.

More than 700 youth left Paolo VI neighbourhood, almost 330 left Tamburi neighbourhood.

The Borgo and the Città Vecchia were less affected, in fact in Città Vecchia young people went slightly up by 21 units.

The rural and semirural areas around the city suffered an important decrease in youth population.



Tamburi-Lido Azzurro

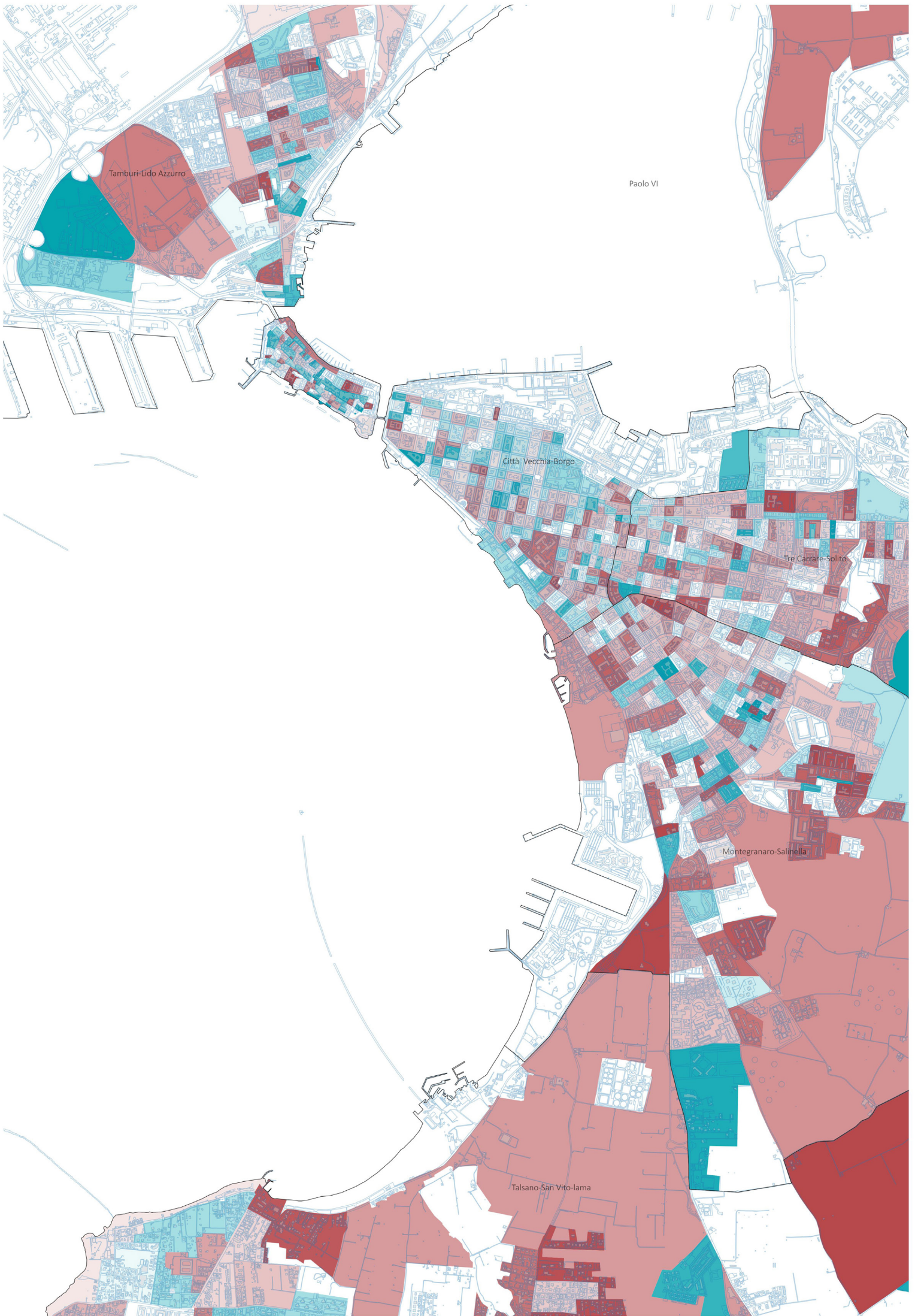
Paolo VI

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Tre Carrare-Solito

Montegrano-Salinella

Talsano-San Vito-lama



Foreign background people

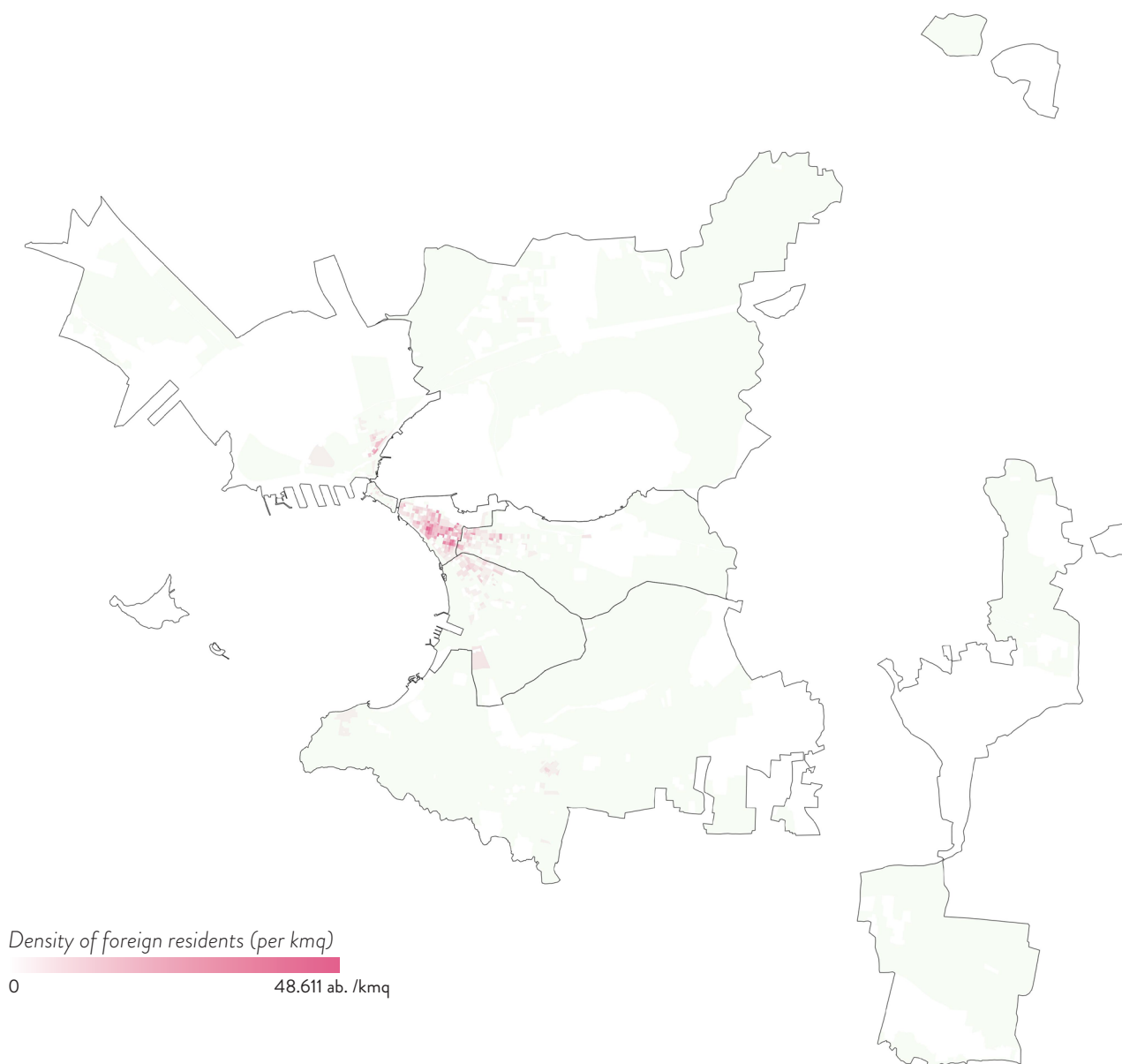
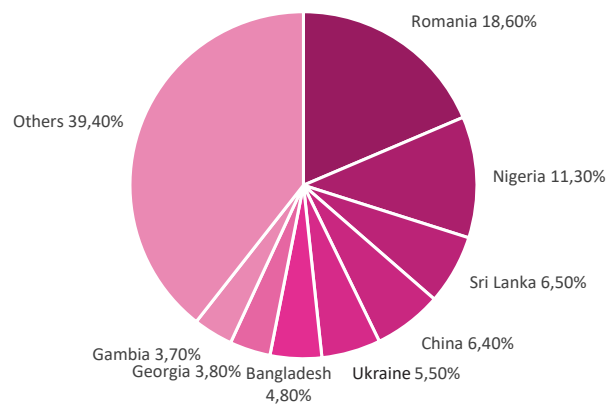
Taranto is the city with the lowest percentage of foreign residents among the ones in this report.

Foreigners constitute only the 2.6% of the overall population, but this considerably increased in the last 20 years (foreigners were the 0,3% of the population in 2007) (Tuttitalia.it, 2023).

This trend is also consistent in the young population, where foreigners are the 4,73% of the young residents.

The larger foreign communities come from Romania, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, China, Ukraine, Bangladesh, Georgia and Gambia (Tuttitalia.it, 2023).

Foreign people tend to concentrate mostly in the Borgo. Some foreign communities are also located in Tamburi and in Tre Carrare Battisti.



Tamburi-Lido Azzurro

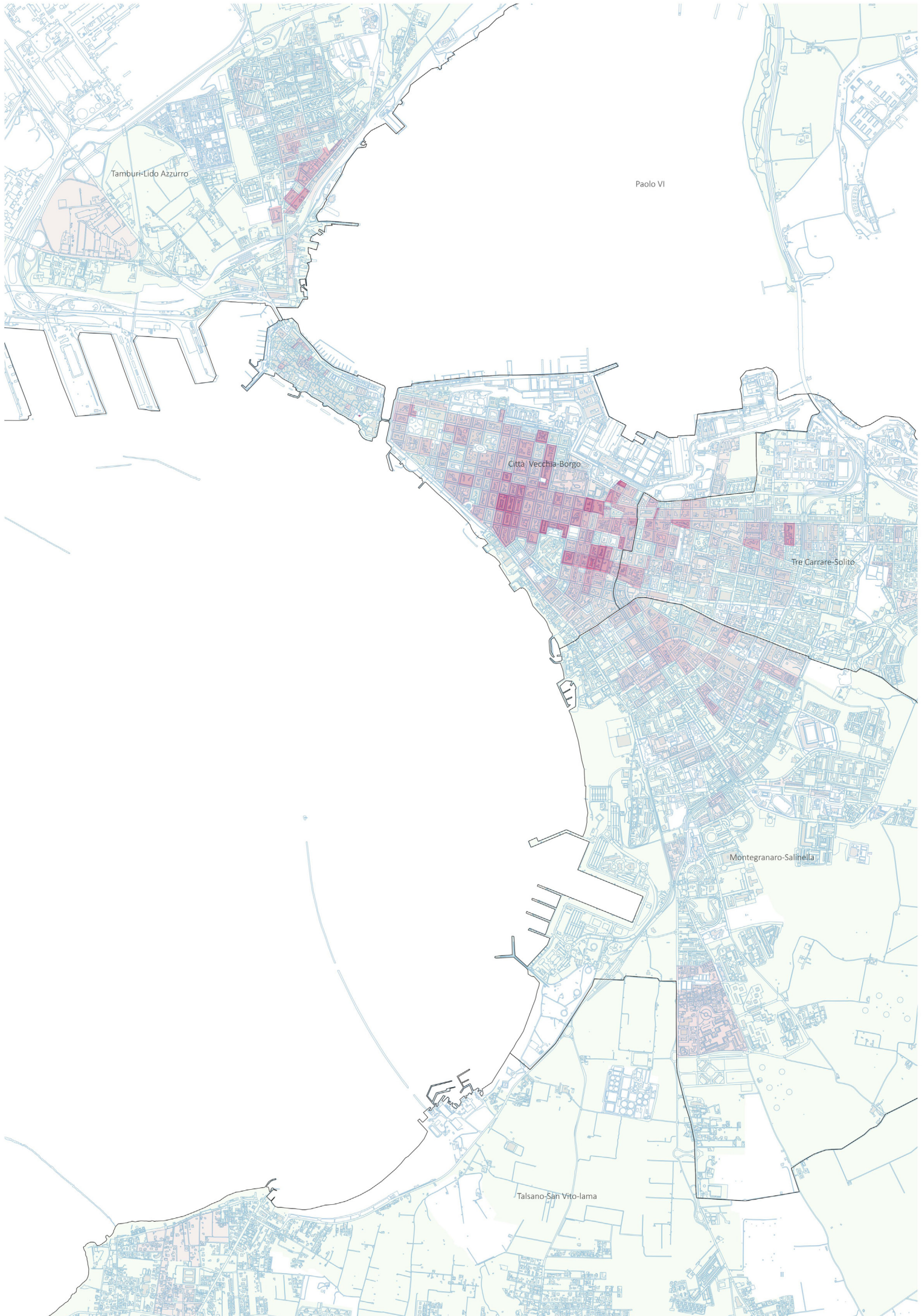
Paolo VI

Città Vecchia-Borgo

Tre Carrare-Solito

Montegrano-Salinella

Talsano-San Vito-lama



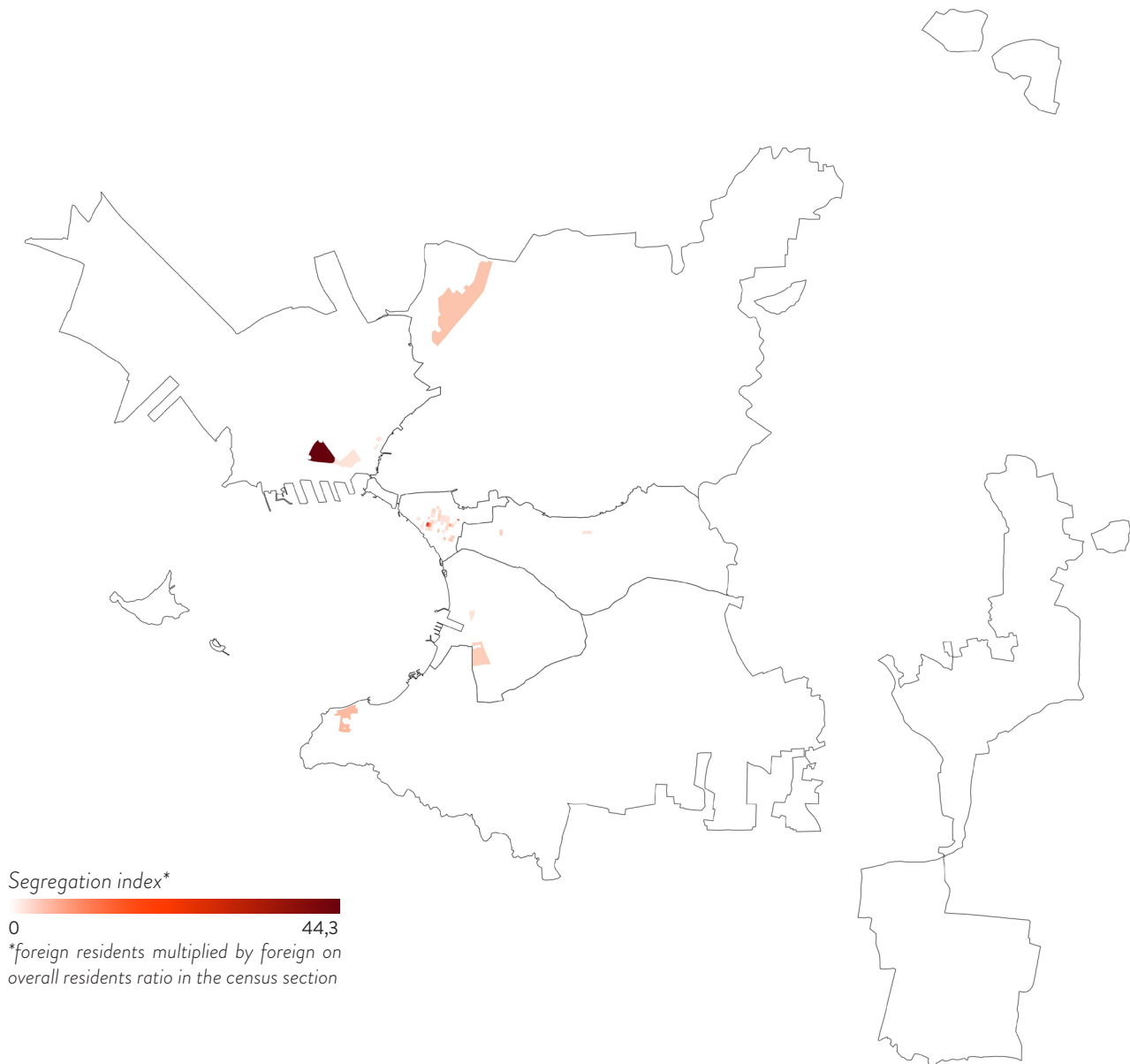
Foreign people segregation

As it was previously discussed, Taranto is a city with a very low presence of foreigners. They tend to concentrate in few areas of the city, in particular in the Borgo which is the center of Taranto.

A possible area of segregation can be found in the Tamburi neighbourhood where an industrial area between Metaponto street and Massafra street is almost only inhabited by foreign people.

The industrial area next to Paolo the Sixth neighbourhood sees a higher concentration of foreigners too.

A higher concentration can also be seen in the peripheral area of Taranto 2 and along San Vito northern coast.



Tamburi-Lido Azzurro

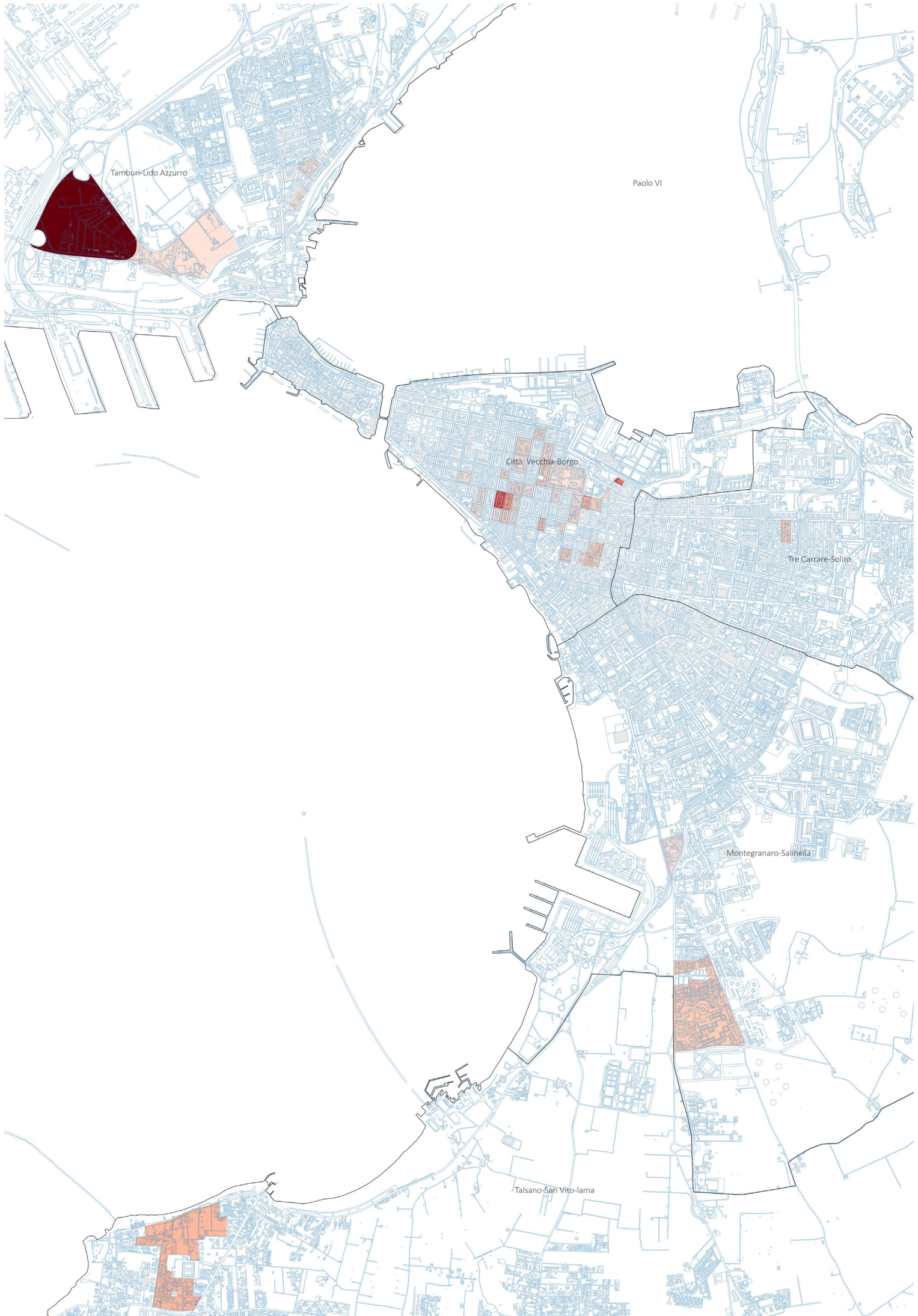
Paolo VI

Città Vecchia-Borgo

Tre Carrare-Solito

Montegrano-Salinella

Talsano-San Vito-lama



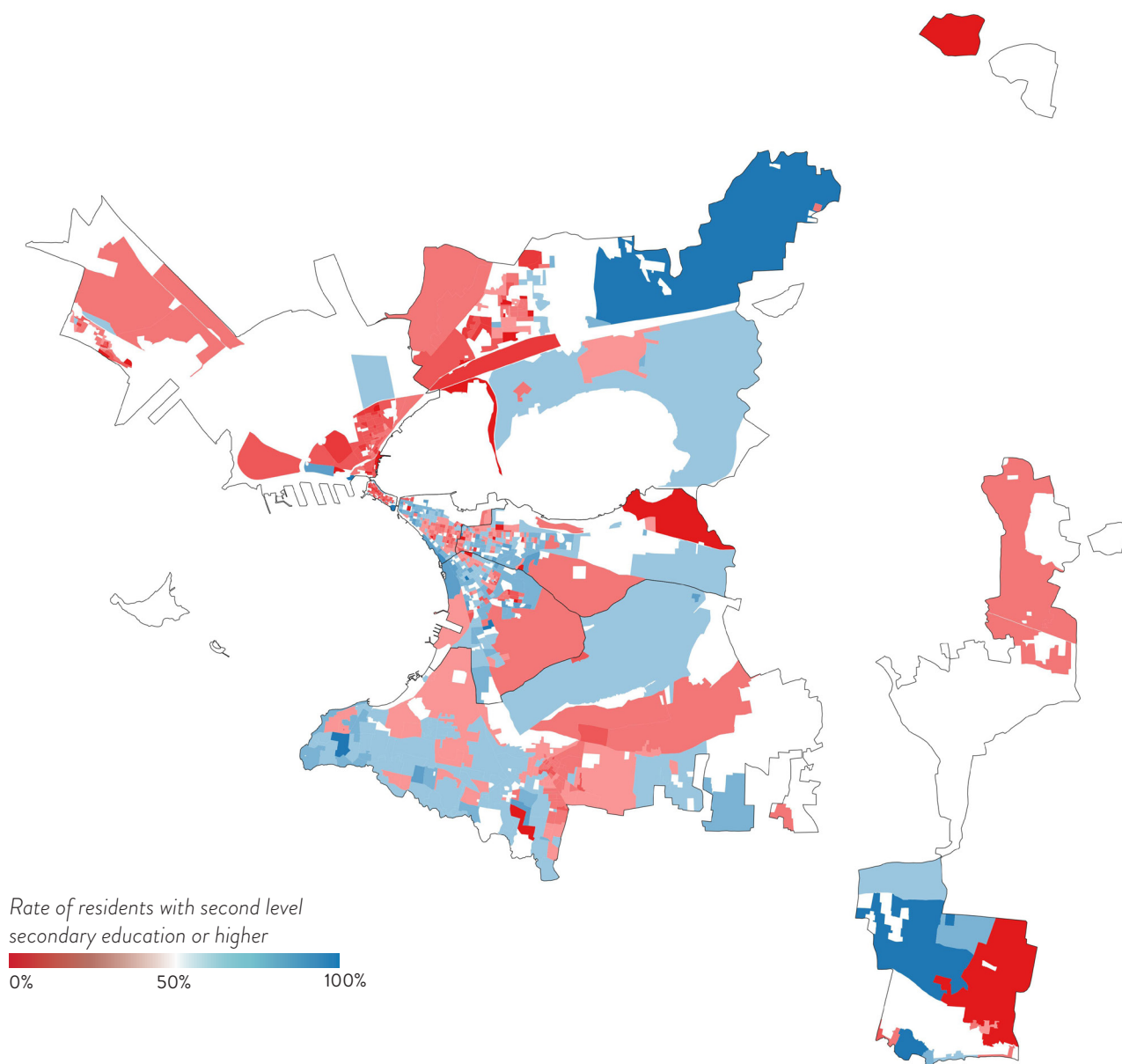
School drop-outs

Around 52,5% of the residents in Taranto hasn't graduated from second grade secondary schools. This underlines a situation that is slightly better than the regional trend (56%) but still very critical. Residents with lower education levels concentrate in Taranto Vecchia, in Tamburi and Paolo the 6th neighbourhoods, but also in the east side of the Borgo. At province level, the high presence of NEETS and the low number of young people that graduated from university are one of the weakness of the province. At province level criticalities emerge in terms of low presence of paediatricians, (83th out of 107 provinces), low mathematical and linguistic skill of medium school children(81st and 83rd in 107 provinces),

take-up rates of children in Early Childhood Education and Care Services (69th out of 107 provinces), school gardens and green spaces for children and adolescents (96th out of 107 provinces).

Nevertheless, the province of Taranto maintained the national standard for the activation of PNRR projects in education (56th out of 107 provinces), and for the social spending for families and minors (57th out of 107 provinces).

An overall view of the quality of life for children sees the province of Taranto performing quite poorly (82nd out of 107) and extremely poorly for the life of young people (106th out of 107) (Il Sole 24 Ore, 2024).



Tamburi-Lido Azzurro

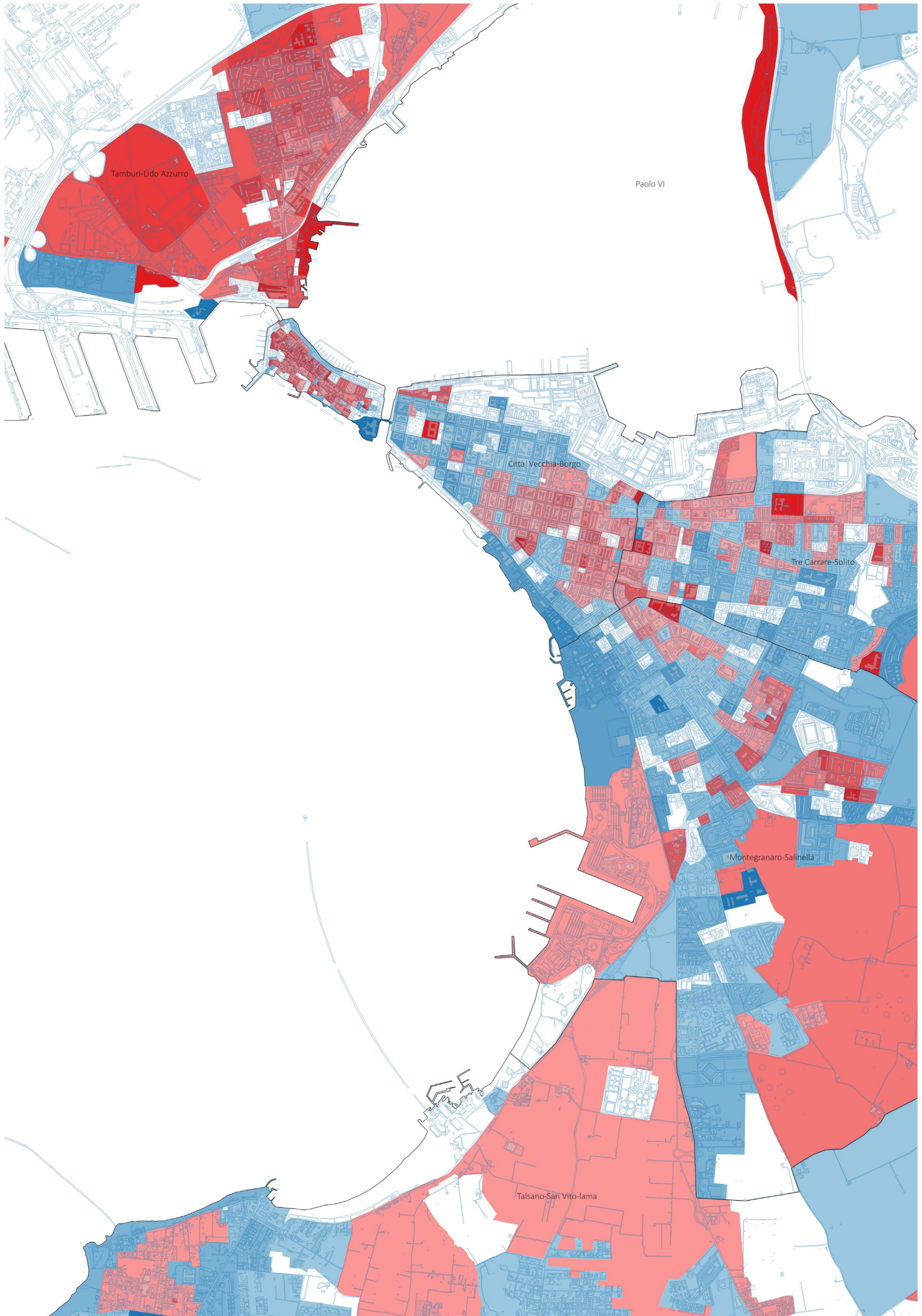
Paolo VI

Città Vecchia-Borgo

Tre Carrare-Solito

Montegrano-Salinella

Talsano-San Vito-lama



Occupation

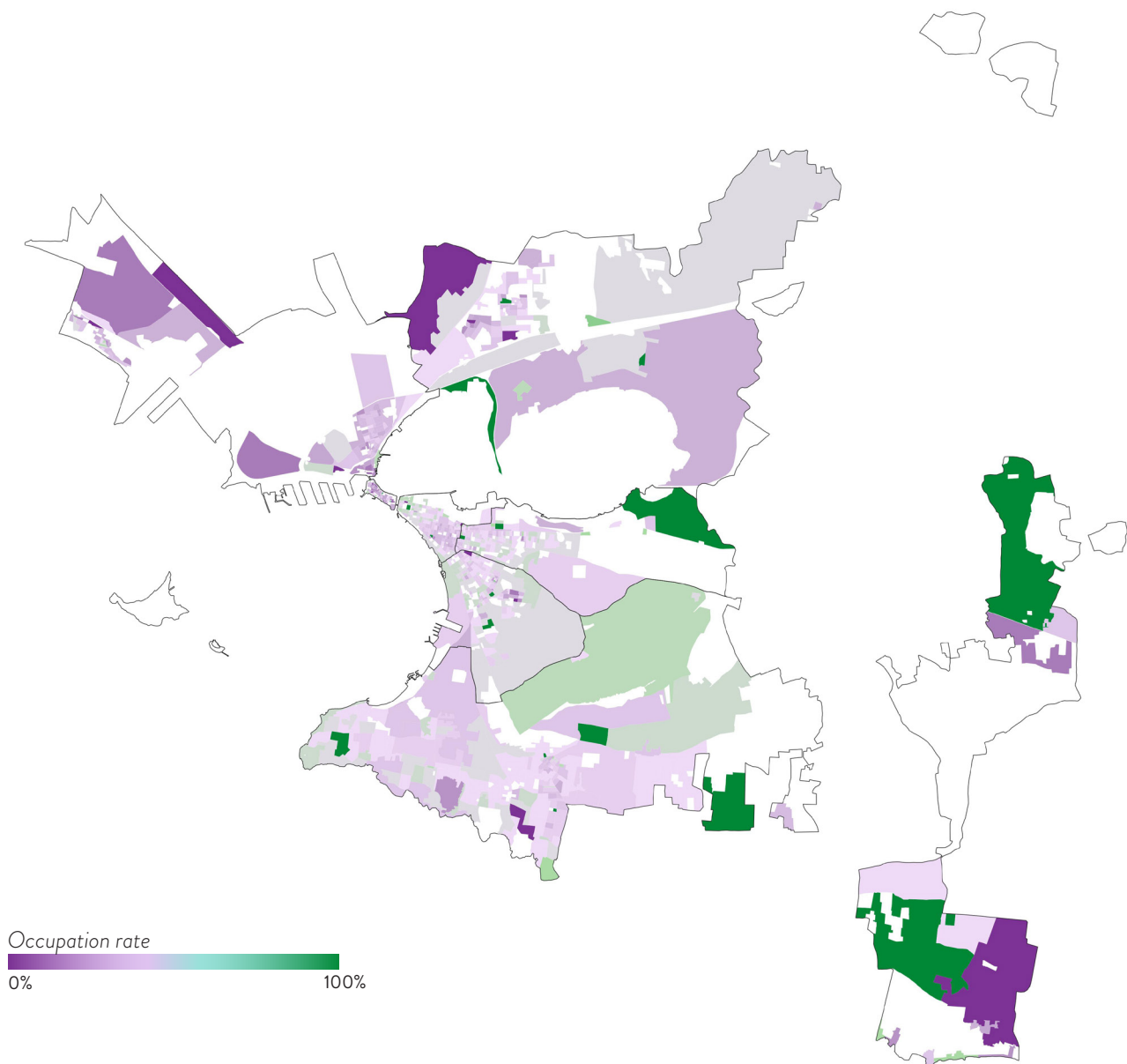
In 2021 the occupation level in Taranto was 48,85% which was lower than the national average 59% (ISTAT, 2021a) but higher than the regional average 46.7% (ISTAT, n.d.a).

At province level the rate lowers under the national average, services are the main sector of employment (70,34%), followed by manufacturing (13,94%), agriculture and primary activities (10,12%) and constructions (5,60%) (ISTAT, 2011).

Considering more recent data at province level we see Lecce's economical situation being slightly better than national average.

In 2023 Taranto was the third worst province for businesses in Italy according to IISole24ore. Too few innovative start ups, foreign business, the low occupation rate and high presence of NEETs, the low level of participation to continuous training and the high rate of job accidents are demeaning for the province's economy.

On the other side Taranto maintained national standards in youth entrepreneurship and distinguished itself for a low number of ceased businesses (23rd out of 107 provinces) (IISole24Ore, 2023).



Tamburi-Lido Azzurro

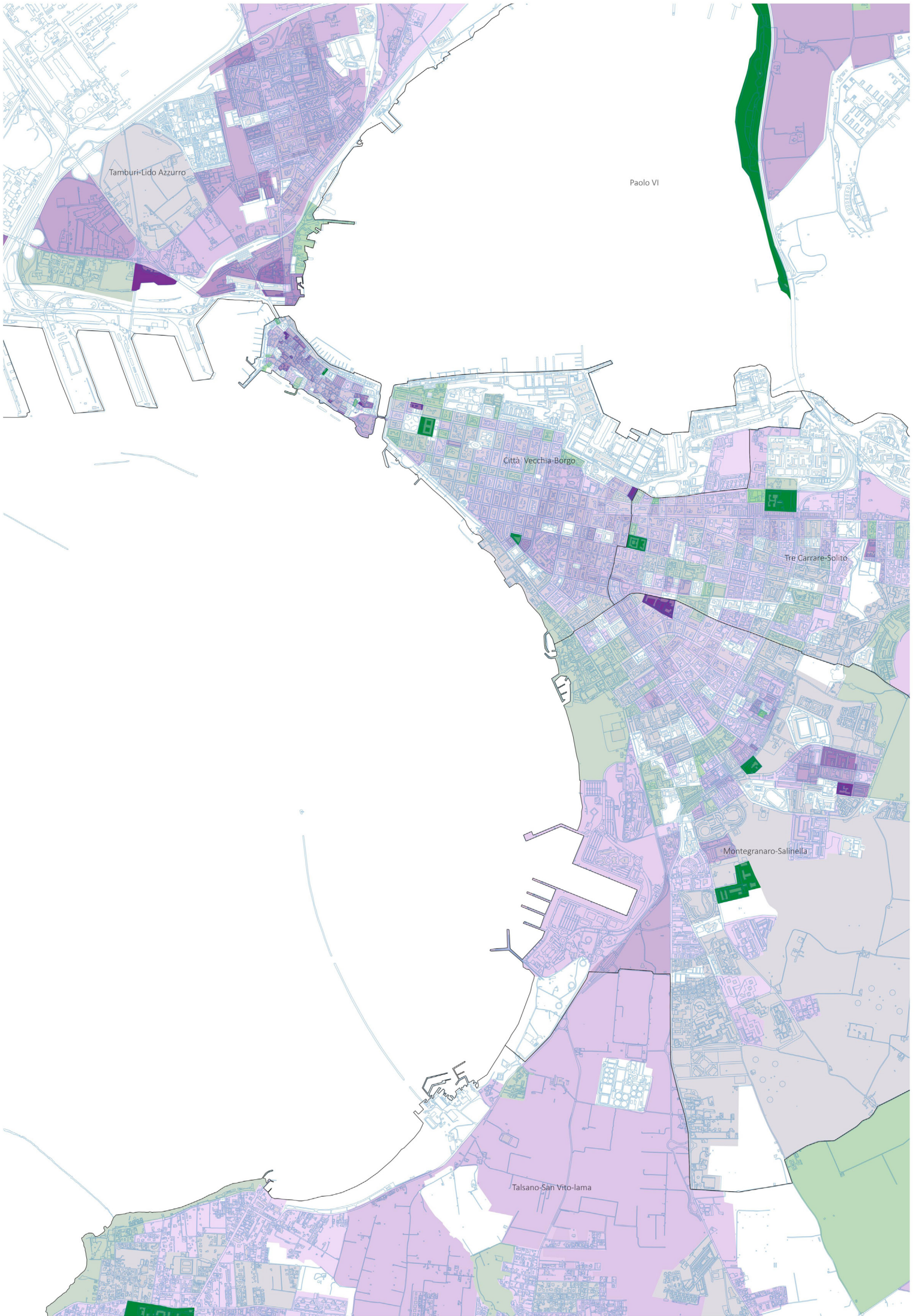
Paolo VI

Città Vecchia-Borgo

Tre Carrare-Solito

Montegrano-Salinella

Talsano-San Vito-lama



YOUTH POLICY SUBSYSTEM

Institutional level: municipal frame in charge of youth policies

Youth policies in the Municipality of Taranto are coordinated by the Youth Policy service. Its primary mission is to enhance and promote youth in all its dimensions through activities such as research, studies, and the dissemination of information related to the youth condition.

By the time this report is being written, the Councilor responsible for youth policies for the Municipality of Taranto is Federica Simili, that recently received the mandate previously given to councillor Angelica Lussoso.

The council was established in January 2024, with the new center Administration led by Mayor Rinaldo Melucci (ANSA, 2024).

The Youth policy service is supposed to focus on the following key areas:

- Support for Youth Activities: Encouraging socio-cultural initiatives organized by associations, youth organizations, and informal groups.
- Implementation of Youth Projects: Promoting projects conceived and developed by young people.
- Support for Youth Organizations: Assisting organizations that deliver activities, manage services, or act as representatives for young people in the community.
- Facilitating Youth Participation: Establishing forums and structures for young people to engage in decision-making and discussions affecting them (Comune di Taranto, n.d.)

Concerning the youth participation initiatives, the establishment of a youth forum and a municipal youth committee. Aside from a call for the municipal youth committee in 2022, no other relevant news are available online (Comune di Taranto, 2022).

One of the main projects for youth that sees an active role of the municipality is TARAS.

The Municipality of Taranto, in collaboration with the Puglia Region, the University of Bari, Concooperative Taranto, the Taranto Volunteer Services Center, the CSEI University Consortium, and the Cabrini Institute of Taranto, is an active partner in the TARAS project, promoted by Programma Sviluppato, the project's lead organization.

The project aims to raise awareness within the Ionian community about the potential for initiating an economic diversification process focused on a development model that leverages the region's tourism, environmental, and cultural heritage.

Among its initiatives, the TARAS project includes integrated activities such as training programs, a business incubator, and consulting services to support the creation and development of new enterprises in the Ionian area through the StarTA Lab.

StarTA is a business creation lab that provides services aimed at fostering innovative processes in start-ups. It offers a fertile environment for young, aspiring entrepreneurs to develop their ideas and prepare to compete in the market.

The program equips participants with essential knowledge and tools to transform a business idea, particularly in the tourism sector, into a successful entrepreneurial project. The pathway includes integrated actions such as training, project work, mentoring, and business incubation, guiding and supporting aspiring entrepreneurs through the startup process.

The consulting services are tailored not only for young potential startup founders looking to develop a tourism-related business idea with a direct impact on the city of Taranto but also for those who have already established a business and seek further support.

Participation in the consulting services is free of charge. Access is available by registering and booking through the technical-organizational office.

Another recent municipal initiative is the project #ArrivoDoveVoglio (I will get where I want), launched by the Social Services Department of Taranto. The project aims to support students aged 14 to 17 in completing their education and overcoming challenges that might lead to school dropout. It provides specialized tutoring and educational stays to address social and economic barriers that hinder young people's personal and professional growth (Blunote, 2024).

It must be noted that the municipality didn't participate in some of the main regional calls for youth initiatives.

No public spaces or assets were disposed by the mu-

municipality for “Luoghi Comuni” urban regeneration project call (Regione Puglia, 2024a).

During the focus group in Taranto, Francesco Sisto, director of “Officine Maremosso” project, suggested that in this kind of calls, proposals usually come from local associations and private actors and bring the municipality to dispose some public asset.

In the latest regional call “Galattica” no node (territorial hub) was individuated in Taranto, the closest node will be in San Giorgio Ionico, Grottaglie, Palagiano and Mottola (Regione Puglia 2024b). This might represent an important missed opportunity both to make services accessible to young people and to link initiatives in Taranto to the regional network.

Other testimonies describe a supportive attitude from the local administration in supporting associations initiatives: for example Ilenia Taranto from TedOfficine, stated that the municipality was willing to give a public space in the peripheries of Taranto for the realisation of a skate park. Even if supported by the municipality, the park was not realised because the promoter association gave up the project.

This might indicate a systemic lack of sense of initiative, that needs to be addressed, but not a lack of support for the projects and actions that are proposed by residents and associations.

Relevant non-institutional actors usually involved across all local youth policies

Taranto is the last city in this report in terms of number of third sector entities compared to the population. (2,46 ETS for every 1.000 residents)(RUNTS, 2024). There’s a higher presence of social enterprises (0,69 for every 1.000 residents), and it’s the only city in the report where mutual aid entities are active, while the presence of social promotion associations and volunteering entities is the lowest among the cities in the report (0,37 for every 1.000 residents).

The CSV (Volunteer Service Center) is quite active in the promotion of youth initiatives such as “Giovani in Volo” (Flying youth).

Giovani in Volo is a long-standing project aimed at high school students in Taranto and its province. The project seeks to promote volunteering and the culture of solidarity within schools, while also connecting young people with local organizations that actively address community needs.

The project is structured in several phases to ensure

an interactive and continuous engagement with students, providing them with hands-on experiences in the world of volunteering. The program includes informational sessions on active citizenship and volunteering, with real-life testimonials from local organizations, as well as practical involvement where students can directly contribute to non-profit activities.

Additionally, *Giovani in Volo* encourages students to share their experiences and reflections, fostering personal growth and a more conscious participation in the community. The project also organizes meetings for school teachers and representatives from the involved organizations to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the initiative.

An important project carried out in recent years was “NEET Equity”.

NEET Equity is a UNICEF project selected by the Department for Youth Policies and Universal Civil Service under the “Prevention and Counteraction of Youth Discomfort” Notice.

The initiative is implemented in three Italian municipalities (Naples, Taranto, and Carbonia) and aims to enhance local capacity to develop inclusive, participatory active policies for the integration of NEET youth (UNICEF, 2021).

The project is structured into three areas of activity: research, urban participation workshops, and forums. Targeting 300 young people aged 16 to 22, during the critical transition from secondary school to the workforce, the project began in May 2018 and concluded in January 2021.

NEET Equity supported the realisation of two urban regeneration projects:

- Teatro Abbàsch (Downthere theater) aims to establish a Youth Theatre Company capable of self-management, training, and attracting peers to help prevent and counter social challenges that lead young people to drop out of school or withdraw from society. The project aimed at revitalising the abandoned Cinema - Theater Verdi in the Borgo neighbourhood.
- Accademia Pubblica della Moda (Public Academy of Fashion) seeks to create a vocational and educational institution by harnessing the diverse expertise present in the local area. This initiative plans to re-purpose an abandoned school building in the Paolo VI neighbourhood to serve as its headquarters (Ibid.).

By the time this report is being written, the urban regeneration of the abandoned building has not taken place. The abandoned school in Paolo VI was closed in

2014 because of structural problems and water infiltration in the roof. The municipality didn't have economical resources to renovate the building (TeleNorba, 2014), so the availability of economical resources, probably played an important role also in the failed realisation of such projects.

The phase of listening of the NEET Equity projects operated through focus groups, urban participation laboratories and interviews. An important consideration was made about how associations are a reference point for youth in Taranto but are fragmented and have low networking capacity (UNICEF, 2019).

Some of the main associations that emerged from the report are:

- Taranto CSV - Volunteer Service Center: organizes a variety of activities with schools, including the "Giovani in Volo" project and the "Ragazzi in Gamba" initiative.
- La città che vogliamo (The city we want): engages young people and the broader community in activities focused on participation and new forms of democracy.
- Athletes: A skating association, creating a space for young people to gather and providing opportunities for them to socialize with peers.
- Arcigay: serves as a support network for LGBTQ+ youth, offering assistance to those facing challenges related to their sexual identity.
- Cittadinanzattiva (Active citizenship): promotes themes of active citizenship and fosters relationships between young people and politics.
- Casa Don Bosco: implements school-based projects on citizenship and organizes workshops and support programs for parents.
- "Porte Aperte" Day Center: supports socially and culturally disadvantaged youth, providing care and fostering social inclusion until they reach adulthood.
- CGS - Youth Socio-Cultural Cine-Clubs: fosters cultural and artistic engagement among young people through cinema.
- TGS - Youth and Social Tourism: promotes travel and cultural exchange opportunities for young people.
- Schools: Key institutions include A. Righi Secondary Education Institute (offering diverse programs and serving over 1,300 students), Aristoseno High School, Cabrini Vocational Institute, and Liside Secondary Education Institute (Ibid.).

An interesting initiative in Taranto is conducted by Shell. Shell InventaGIOVANI (Youth Invent) is a social investment program promoted by Shell Italia

E&P, as part of the global Shell LiveWIRE initiative active in 20 countries worldwide.

The program offers free training and guidance to young residents of Puglia interested in starting a business within the region. It helps participants evaluate whether entrepreneurship could be a viable and achievable career path, focusing on local opportunities, entrepreneurial needs, and the professional aspirations of young people. The initiative includes assistance in drafting business plans, connections with industry experts, economic development organizations, and banks.

InventaGIOVANI operates with the support of several institutions, including the Municipality of Taranto, the University of Bari Aldo Moro, BaLab, the Port Authority of the Ionian Sea, Confindustria Taranto, and Finindustria.

Some of the start ups supported by Shell in Taranto are:

- Wast3D Shells focuses on recycling mussel shells to create customizable products using 3D printing technology. One of the initial sectors for its application is eco-friendly construction (bio-building).
- Localmatic is working on a platform that facilitates direct online advertising for local traditional media, enabling clients to profile their target audience and validate the effectiveness of their advertising campaigns with clear results.
- Techloop is developing an innovative platform to accelerate the adoption of Smart Manufacturing among micro and small Italian businesses. The platform simplifies operational processes, enhances human-machine interaction through an advanced user experience, and incorporates a new AI model for proactive maintenance assistance.
- To Be Accelerator aims to reduce unemployment and the digital skills gap by providing professional guidance and digital training activities (Shell, 2023).

Role of trade unions in the design and implementation of urban youth policies

Trade Unions, and in particular CGIL, play a limited role in the initiatives for young people in Taranto.

As for the projects presented so far, CGIL was consulted once in Shell InventaGIOVANI initiatives and a NIDIL representative was involved in the interviews of NEET Equity project.

CGIL Taranto conducted and collaborated with the student union "Rete degli studenti medi" in several

researches on youth discomfort in recent years.

A first questionnaire “...Tra mondo della scuola e mondo del lavoro...” was proposed in 2018 to a thousand students in Taranto and in the province, with questions about youth perception of the city, of the local community and politics and the local job-market (CGIL Taranto, 2018).

“Incazzati a Nero” (Very angry and illegally employed) is a research carried out in 2022 through online questionnaires proposed to 200 youth. Many abuses in the working environment endured by young people were reported through this initiative: in particular physical violence, missing contracts and sexual harassments (CGIL Taranto, 2022). 77% of the interviewed youth were willing to leave their hometown, 20% had seven days a week working experiences, 36% worked more than 8 hours a day and 2 out of 3 had no working contract, among those who had a working contract, 20% never saw it or received it. Very negative feedbacks were given on PCTO (Paths for Transversal Skills and Orientation) in secondary second level schools (Ibid.) In 2023 another research called “Costruttori di Progresso” (Progress Makers) was conducted by NIDIL CGIL, CGIL and the Maria Pia school’s students in Taranto.

The situation for young people in Taranto is shaped by various factors that limit their aspirations. High economic and social hardship, particularly in families with children, contributes to significant challenges.

The educational system also creates large disparities, while the job market remains bleak. Almost 30% of young people in the region are unemployed, and one in five falls into the “NEET” category (Not in Education, Employment, or Training).

Many are employed in precarious, non-standard contracts that offer little job stability, often facing under-employment. For most young people, school is an experience filled with anxiety about an uncertain future, perceived as full of threats and limited opportunities. (CGIL Taranto, 2023).

CGIL Taranto also collaborates in PCTOs training courses in secondary second level schools.

In 2024, in the training courses conducted with three institutes in the city—“Principessa Maria Pia,” “Liside,” and “Archimede”—significant emphasis was placed on European policies and cohesion funds.

These topics were explored through discussions and reflections by the students, which were captured in a questionnaire. The results clearly show that European integration can no longer be taken for granted within the automatic assumptions of *laissez-faire*. However, the new generations express resilient hope towards Europe, underlining their determination to continue building and improving the European project despite

the challenges (CGIL NIDIL Taranto, 2024).

Remarks on the urban policy subsystem

Youth discomfort in Taranto needs to be better addressed.

Municipality uses very little resources to promote youth policies: in 2022 municipal budget only 3.220€ were allocated specifically to youth policies (0,02€ per resident), and in previous budgets since 2016 there were no resources allocated at all (Open-Bilanci, 2022).

The testimonies collected in this research deem the local administration as open and supportive towards initiatives promoted by residents and associations, but not proactive in directly elaborating projects.

A higher level of involvement of youth through a youth forum or a higher activity of the municipal youth committee could help the proactivity of the local administration.

Compared with the other cities in the report there is less associative life. Furthermore, local associations are quite disconnected to each other. This calls for initiatives that allows different associations to come together in order to enhance the offer of services and help for young people.

Trade unions, in particular CGIL, initiatives were more focused on consulting and monitoring the state of the art of youth discomfort in the city. This report calls out to a more active role in the design and implementation of active policies.

OFFICINA MAREMOSSO

Officina Maremosso is a social promotion association dedicated to preserving and sharing the tradition of sailing craftsmanship in the city of Taranto and its Gulf. Its work emphasizes traditional wooden ship and boat carpentry and construction, aiming to keep this maritime heritage alive and accessible for future generations.

Topics

Rediscovering and preserving traditional maritime craftsmanship through the world of traditional sailing.

Beneficiaries - Target group

Educational and professional traditional maritime craftsmanship workshops are proposed to secondary second level students, young people from the Juvenile and Community Justice Center of Puglia and Basilicata and university students.



(Officina Maremosso, 2021)
Our personal Sailgp - Team Pirates



Contents

Policy goals

The establishment of Officina Sociale Maremosso aimed at providing the city of Taranto and the Puglia region with its first and only Educational Shipyard dedicated to preserving, developing, and teaching traditional maritime and shipbuilding techniques. This unique facility focuses on training for roles such as Master Shipwright, Naval Carpenter, and Nautical Rigger.

Policy instruments

The goals of the projects are designed to culminate in the launch of completed vessels through a collaborative and integrated process.

This process includes workshops, educational shipyards, and special events focused on specific tasks or milestones, allowing participants to fully immerse themselves in the practices and dynamics of the shipbuilding sector.

The finished shipyards and projects become tools for teaching the concepts of Crew and Community—fundamental conditions for fostering collaboration, responsibility, respect, and care for the environment, society, and the unique characteristics of the territory.

Summing up, the competences that Officine Maremosso can offer are:

- Carpentry and Nautical and Naval Construction;
- Social and community activation;
- Professional and educational training aimed at disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged subjects;
- Academic training aimed at professionals and workers in the recreational boating and shipbuilding sector;
- Theoretical/practical training and teaching on offshore and coastal sailing and on the management of recreational boats;
- Training internships for the figure of master shipwright useful for taking the exam at the Technical Register of Naval Construction.

Expected results

Officina Sociale Maremosso started in 2017 after winning the regional call “PIN - Pugliesi Innovativi” (Innovative Apulians), that promoted the realisation of youth entrepreneurship projects. The first project aimed to create Taranto’s first experimental program focused on establishing a laboratory for interdisciplinary maritime education by preserving traditional seafaring skills. The goal was to develop a Social Workshop that contributes to the environmental, economic, and cultural revitalization of the Ionian region. It sought to equip young people with essential tools for social integration and employment by leveraging the city’s fundamental resources: the sea and maritime trades. The project included the restoration of a wooden sloop sail-boat, offering participants hands-on experience with trades such as shipwright craftsmanship.

Upon completion, the restored sail-boat would have served as a dynamic tool for teaching teamwork, fostering collaboration, responsibility, and respect for others, the environment, and the unique characteristics of the territory.



Achieved results

After the completion of the planned activities for PIN - Pugliesi Innovativi call, Officina Sociale Maremosso became a stable enterprise that offers traditional maritime craftsmanship. Beside that the association remained active in education and training for young people and in particular for young people under precautionary measures.

With support from a network of local and national experts and the expertise accumulated over the years, the project has created an integrated system of activities in collaboration with the few remaining maritime artisans. Officina Sociale Maremosso has become a recognized hub for traditional shipbuilding, offering services ranging from restoration and preservation to the construction of both historical and modern Mediterranean wooden vessels. These are crafted using traditional techniques, sometimes enhanced with modern tools and technologies, ensuring the continuation of this rich maritime heritage.

*(Principi Erranti, 2018)
Officina Maremosso*

Policy networks

Currently, solid partnerships and active educational shipyards have been established with several key institutions. These include the Department of Juvenile and Community Justice under the Ministry of Justice, the CGM of Puglia and Basilicata (Center for Minors justice), USSM Taranto (Minors social service office), the Naval Military Arsenal of Taranto, the University of Bari Aldo Moro, the Polytechnic University of Bari, the "Archimede" Institute of Transport and Logistics (formerly Nautical School) in Taranto, Laboratorio del Mare in Taranto (Sea Lab-

oratory), and the Port Authority of the Ionian Sea – Port of Taranto. Additionally, further collaborative projects with prominent entities in the regional nautical and naval shipbuilding sectors are currently under development, aiming to strengthen and expand these initiatives.

Interactions

Officina Maremosso not only was able to establish interactions with some of the main local and regional actors in the nautical sector such as the Military Nautical Arsenal and the Port Authority but also connected with similar international associations such as Albaola Itsas Kultur Faktoria in Spain. Furthermore the connection with schools allowed them to get involved in PCTOs (Paths for transversal skills and orientation) programs.

Most of the interactions between the association and other entities is formalised through conventions, partnerships and memoranda of understanding

The actors

Promoter and financier

Regione Puglia (first call), Ministry of Justice - Department of Juvenile Justice, and Port System Authority of the Ionian Sea - Port of Taranto, Fondazione con il Sud (With the south)

Participants in the call

Officina Maremosso

Other subjects involved

Centro Giustizia Minorile e di Comunità di Puglia e Basilicata (Center of minors justice)

University of Foggia

Politecnico di Bari (Politechnic university of Bari)

University of Ferrara

IISS Archimede in Taranto (High school)

Garante dei diritti del minore della Regione Puglia

Municipality of Taranto, Roseto Capo Spulico (CS),

Castrignano del Capo (LE), Fasano (BR)

“Sale della Terra” (Land Salt) Consortium

“Meridia” Consortium

“Homines Novi” formation entity

Remarks and Comments

Overall Officine Maremosso, is a successful youth initiative that is able to combine entrepreneurship and social interest. The theme of economical reconversion is extremely central in Taranto’s socio-political debate. In their press kit, the association affirms that “The basis for an alternative economic and social reconversion lies both in concrete practices and constructive ideas, and above all in the critical sense of the relationships and the cultural and social development of the actors who must necessarily be its protagonists.” (Officine Maremosso, 2023). This can be seen in the attempt at preserving and valorizing one of the main traditional specializations in Taranto’s economy.

LATINA

Latina is a city located in the Lazio region of central Italy, about 60 km south of Rome. It serves as the capital of the Province of Latina and is situated in the fertile agricultural region known as the Pontine Plain. Founded in 1932 during the Fascist era, Latina is the youngest city in Italy, with a unique history tied to the reclamation of marshland.

Latina has a diversified economy, with its historical roots in agriculture thanks to the reclamation of the Pontine Plain. Today, the city is also home to various industries, including pharmaceuticals, chemicals, and food production. Additionally, the proximity to Rome

and its location along major transportation routes have facilitated the growth of commercial and logistical activities.

Latina is also known for its natural beauty and access to outdoor activities, making it an appealing spot for those interested in nature and leisure. Some highlights include:

Parco Nazionale del Circeo: A nearby national park offering hiking trails, coastal landscapes, and diverse flora and fauna.

Lago di Fogliano: A beautiful lake ideal for bird-watching and nature walks.

Beaches: The coastal areas near Latina, such as Sa-



baudia and San Felice Circeo, provide popular seaside destinations for both residents and tourists. The Latina Campus of Sapienza University of Rome provides higher education opportunities in various fields, particularly focusing on medicine, nursing, engineering, and agricultural sciences. As a satellite campus of one of Europe's oldest and most prestigious universities, it plays a crucial role in serving students in the southern part of the Lazio region.

Latina has grown steadily over the decades and now has a population of about 125,000 people. Residents are not only concentrated in the city but also in var-

ious "Borghi", satellite villages, in the rural areas and along the coast. The city is a melting pot of cultures, with a mix of residents from various parts of Italy due to the original resettlement and more recent migration trends.

Esposito. (2024). People's plaza in Latina. (Original title: Latina patrimonio Unesco: la proposta nostalgica della Lega)



Statistical Indicators

Description of the indicator	2007	2011	2015	2019	Last year available	Territorial level	Type	Note
Tot. Population	115.490	117.760	125.985	127.037	127.719	City	Absolute numbers	Last date 03/2024
Youth population (15-24)	12.452	12.325	12.686	12.941	12.888	City	Absolute numbers	Last year 2023
Youth population (25-29)	7.953	7.579	6.714	6.837	6.665	City	Absolute numbers	Last year 2023
Youth population (30-34)	9.917	9.142	7.363	7.246	7.073	City	Absolute numbers	Last year 2023
Young-age dependency ratio (pop 15< over 15-64 population)*	22,06%	22,86%	22,14%	21,29%	19,91%	City	Ratio *	Last year 2023
Old-age dependency ratio (pop 64+ over 15-64 population)**	23,08%	24,63%	30,38%	31,70%	34,26%	City	Ratio **	Last year 2023
% of foreigners on the total population	3,9%	7,40%	7,40%	8,80%	9,40%	City	%	Last year 2023
% of foreigners on youth population	5,47%	11,75%	12,55%	14,08%	13,01%	City	%	Last year 2023
% of people with tertiary education		14,03%		16,69%	18,53%	City	%	Last year 2022
% of youth with tertiary education					23,3% (2022)	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2022 (25-39 years old)
% of employed people (15-64)	55,30%	53,90%	51,00%	54,30%	57,20%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of employed youth 15-24 years old	26,40%	23,60%	16,40%	17,80%	19,20%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of employed youth 25-34 years old	69,30%	62,60%	57,60%	58,40%	64,40%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of unemployed people (15-74)	7,90%	9,70%	16,60%	13,70%	8,9% (2023)	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of unemployed youth 15-24 years old	20,30%	17,80%	43,50%	29,90%	21,20%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% of unemployed youth 25-34 years old	8,60%	14,10%	19,70%	18,00%	13,70%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2023
% NEET among youth		12,9%		24,80%	20,60%	Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2022
% of school drop-outs among youth	10,60%	15%	11,30%	12,00%	11,90%	Region (NUTS 2)	%	Last year 2020
GDP per person	21.645,3	19.701,9	19.421,8	20.975,4	21.588,4	Province (NUTS 3)	Currency	Last year 2021
Average income per household	103.073,6 (2008)	103.455,4	103.626,5	109.484	117.500,5	Region (NUTS 2)	Currency	Last year 2022
Housing market price per sq	981,27	1.700,00	1.300,00	1.150,00	1.150,00	Province (NUTS 3)	Currency	Last year 2023

Description of the indicator	2007	2011	2015	2019	Last year available	Territorial level	Type	Note
Distribution of employment by sector:				2020		Province (NUTS 3)	%	Last year 2021
- Agriculture/mining (primary)			9,62%	12,71%	12,57%			
- Construction			7,09%	7,19%	7,06%			
- Manufacturing			12,86%	12,41%	12,27%			
- Services			70,43%	67,69%	68,10%			
Available beds for tourists in the City	5.855	5.959	5.005	4.973	5.042	City	Number	Last year 2023
Universities in the City	2	2	2	2	2	City	Number	
Post-secondary non-tertiary centres						City	Number	
Secondary / Upper secondary schools			37	41	46	City	Number	Last year 2024
Unemployment benefits received by people looking for work					37.632,55	Province (NUTS 3)	Number of beneficiaries	Last year 2023
Activation/support measures received by people looking for work						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Incentives for Start-Up and/or support for self-employment						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Rent benefits for youth						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Living benefits for youth						City	Number of beneficiaries	
Social housing units					2.075	City	Number	2022
Social housing units					7.180	Province (NUTS 3)	Number	2022
Take-up rates of children 0-2 in Early Childhood Education and Care Services			26,2% (2016)	27,8% (2020)	33,6%	City	Rates	Last year 2022 Take up rate of children 0-2
Average age of leaving the parental home			29,85	30,10	26,35	Country	Age	Last year 2022
Average age of having the first child	29,9	30,32	30,74	31,4	31,5	Province (NUTS 3)	Age	Last year 2023
Total public expenditure on education	4,40%	4,10%	4,00%	3,90%	4,10%	Country	% of GDP	Last year 2021
Expenditure in active labour market policies		0,31%	0,42%	0,21%	0,22%	Country	% of GDP	Last year 2020
Expenditure in start-up incentives						Country	% of GDP	
Expenditure in youth policies	0,01%	0,001%	0,0003%	0,002%	0,003%	Country	% of GDP	Last year 2023

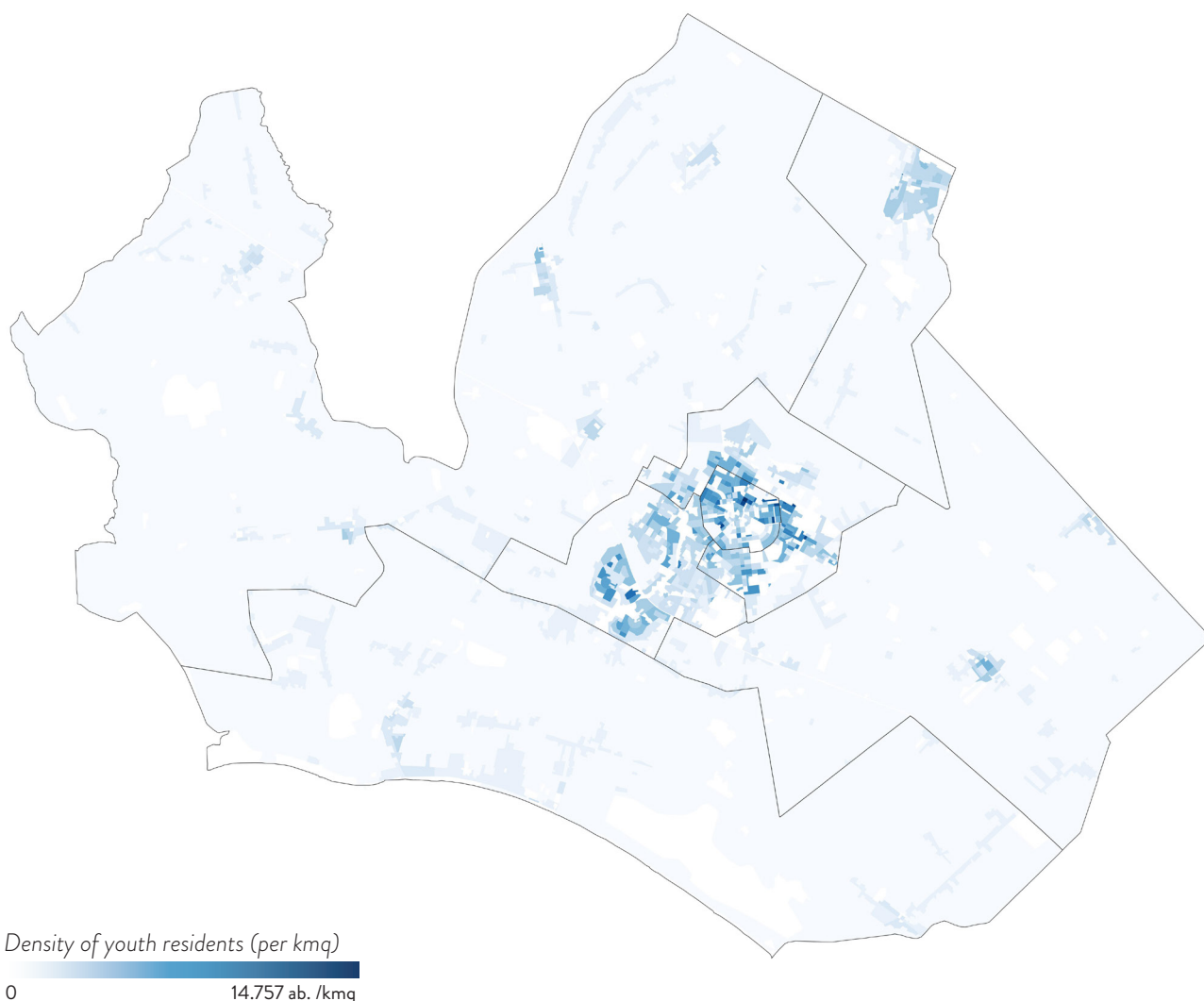
Young people

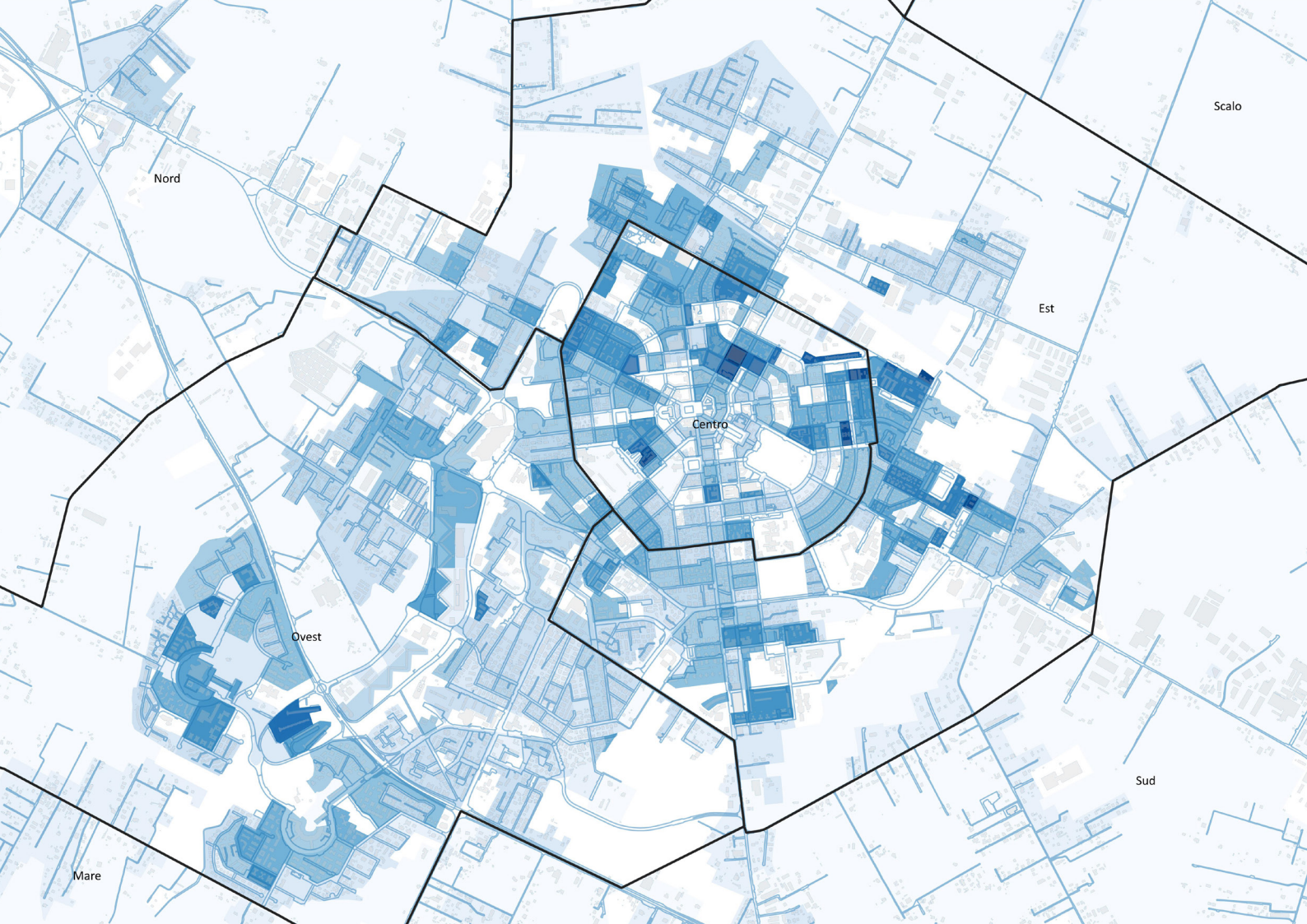
Latina's young people constitute 20,8% of the overall population of the city (127.719 people) (ISTAT, 2023). A high concentration of young people can be seen both in the center of Latina, in Frezzotti, Nuova Latina, Goretti, Campo Boario, Europa and Italia neighbourhoods, Scalo Latina and Borgo San Michele.

The overall population of the city increased by 10,5 % since 2007, but still the young population decreased by 12,2% (3.696 units).

At province level in 2023, Latina did not reach national standard in terms of NEETS (75 out of 107 provinces with 20,6% of NEETS among young people (IlSole24ore, 2023)).

Latina was generally deemed very critical in terms of quality of life for young people (91st out of 107 provinces)(Il Sole 24 Ore, 2024a).





In particular the most critical data are the shrinking of young people population (-0,2% in 4 years), the number of marriages (85th out of 107 provinces), the percentage of young people with university degrees (79th out of 107 provinces), young people disoccupation (15,4%) and the stabilisation of job positions. On the other side some positive data for the province of Latina are the medium age to have a first child, the average rent for houses in semi central locations and the youth entrepreneurship which is slightly more active than the national average (Ibid.).

Also the organisation of live concerts and events was one of the lowest in Italy (102nd out of 107 provinces).

On the other side in the province of Latina rents rate in semi central areas are particularly low (13,9% of the average income, 20th out of 107 provinces) and youth enterprises constitute 8,5% of all enterprises (21st out of 107 provinces).

The provinces performs to national standards in terms of presence of sportive infrastructures, bars and night clubs and average age to have a first child (IISole24ore, 2023).

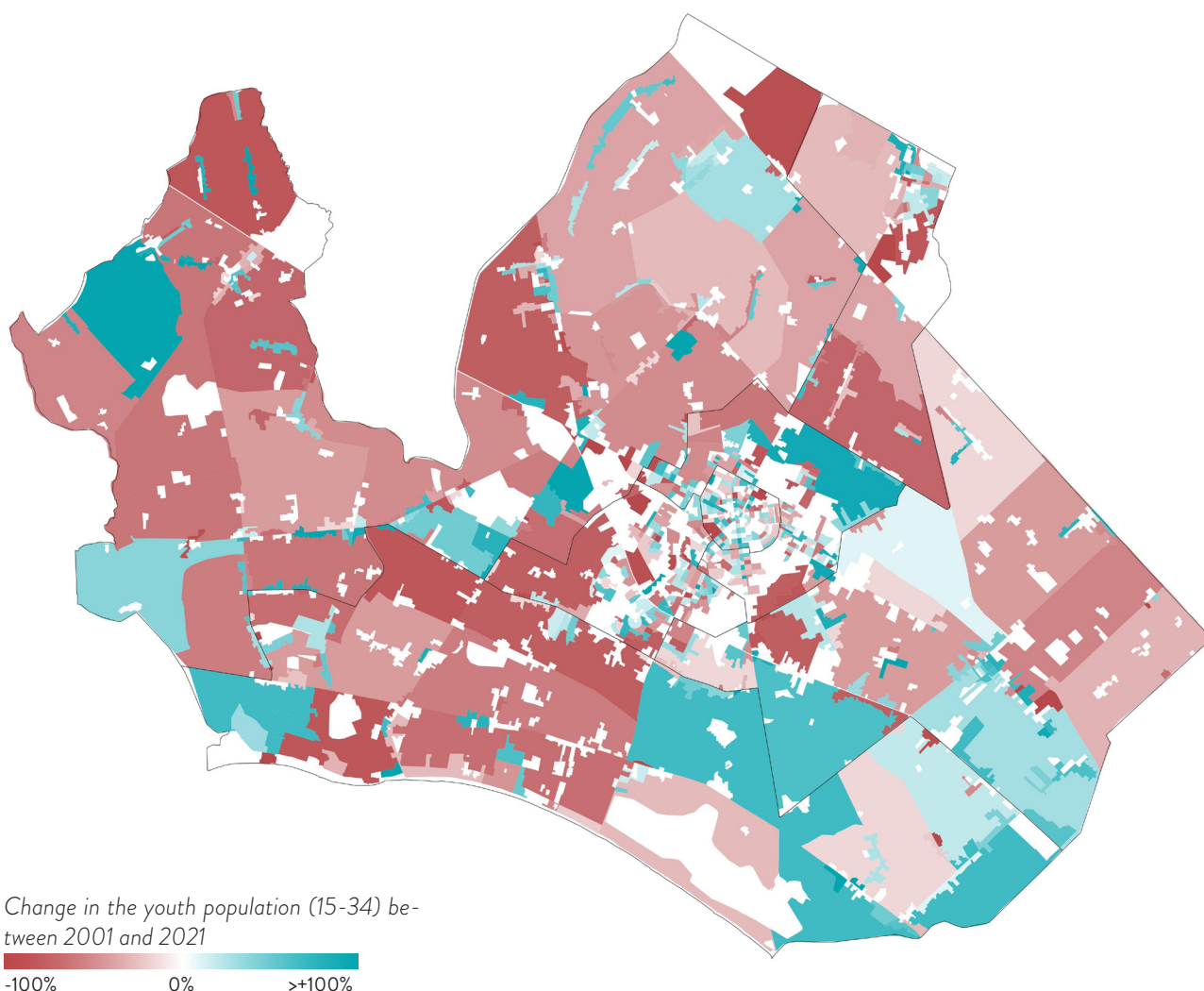
Young people's change in time

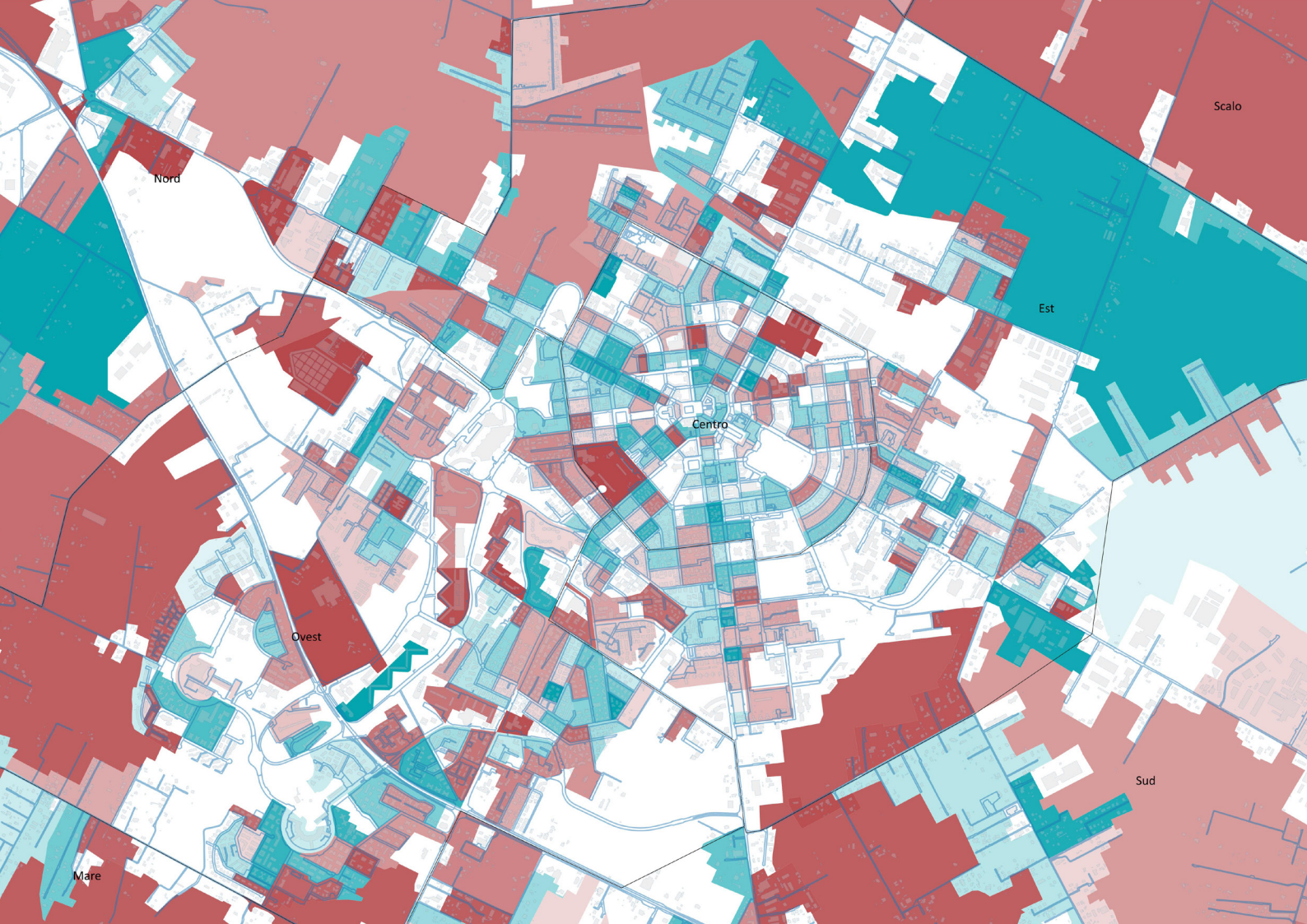
Even if the overall population grew in the last 20 years, young people decreased significantly. This may reflect a lack of attractiveness of the city to young people.

Apart from the area around Borgo Grappa, most of the rural areas in Latina were strongly affected.

Apart from Astura and Foce Verde, the coast lost many young residents.

Young people concentrated in the center of the city and in some of the main Borghi, such as Latina Scalo, Borgo San Michele.





Some of the neighbourhood that were affected the most are Europa neighbourhood, Frezzotti, Agorà, Italia neighbourhood and Isonzo.

One of the most critical aspects that impact the quality of life in the province of Latina are connected to environment and services that are lacking (IISole24ore, 2023): low number of PNRR projects, low quality of life for youth, children and women, and low quality of the urban ecosystem.

Justice and safety also impacted the quality of life: since 1991 Latina performed pretty poorly (in 2023 Latina placed 90th out of 107 provinces). In particular, the province has a high rate of car thefts, arsons, money laundering, civil cases and road accidents (IISole24Ore, 2023).

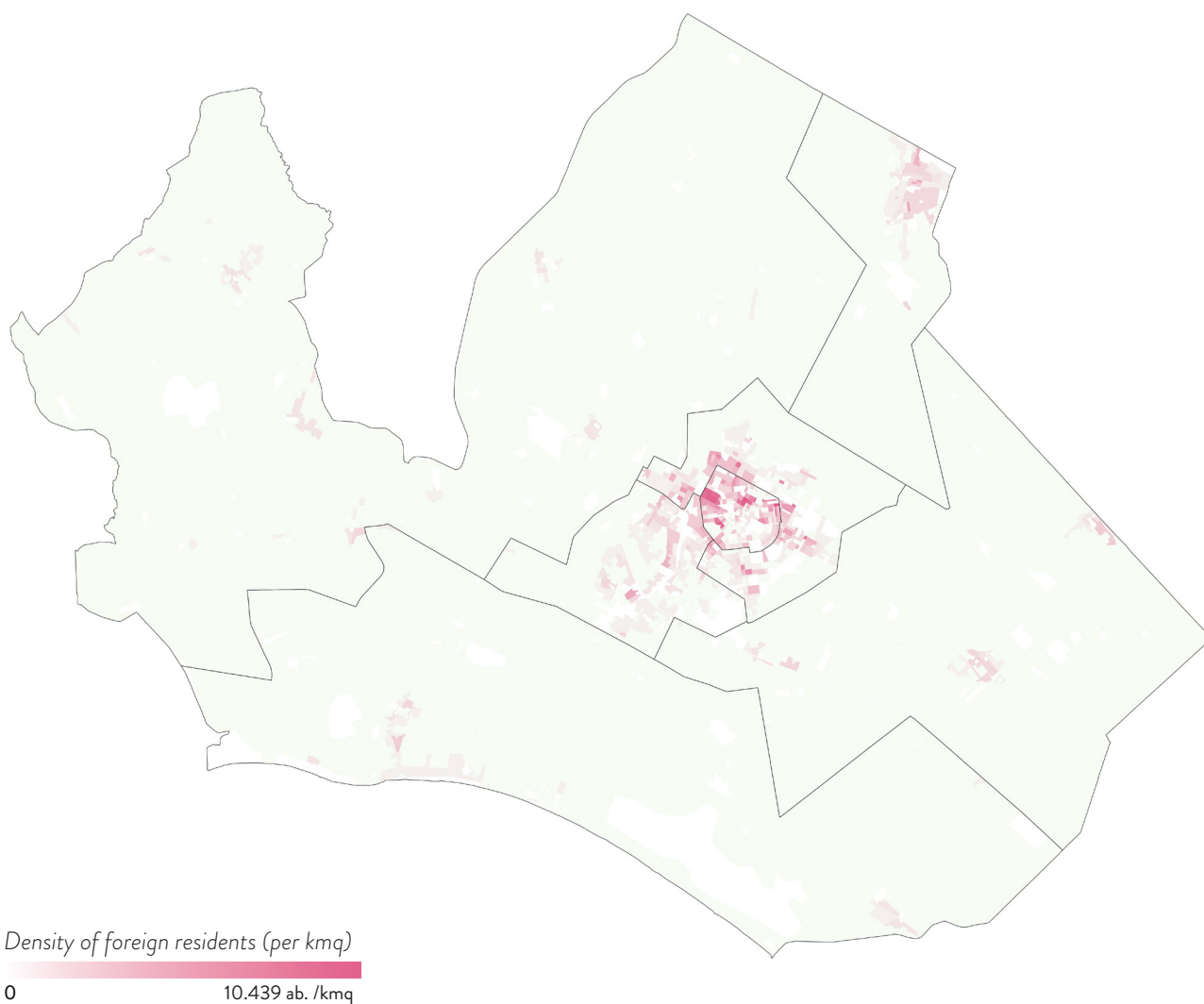
Other elements that negatively affect the quality of life are richness and consumption (80th out of 107 provinces) and culture and free time activity offer (79th out of 107 provinces)(Ibid.).

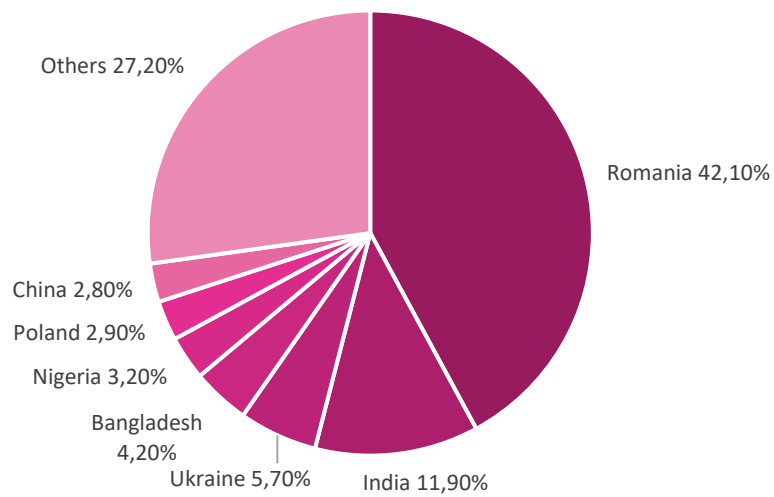
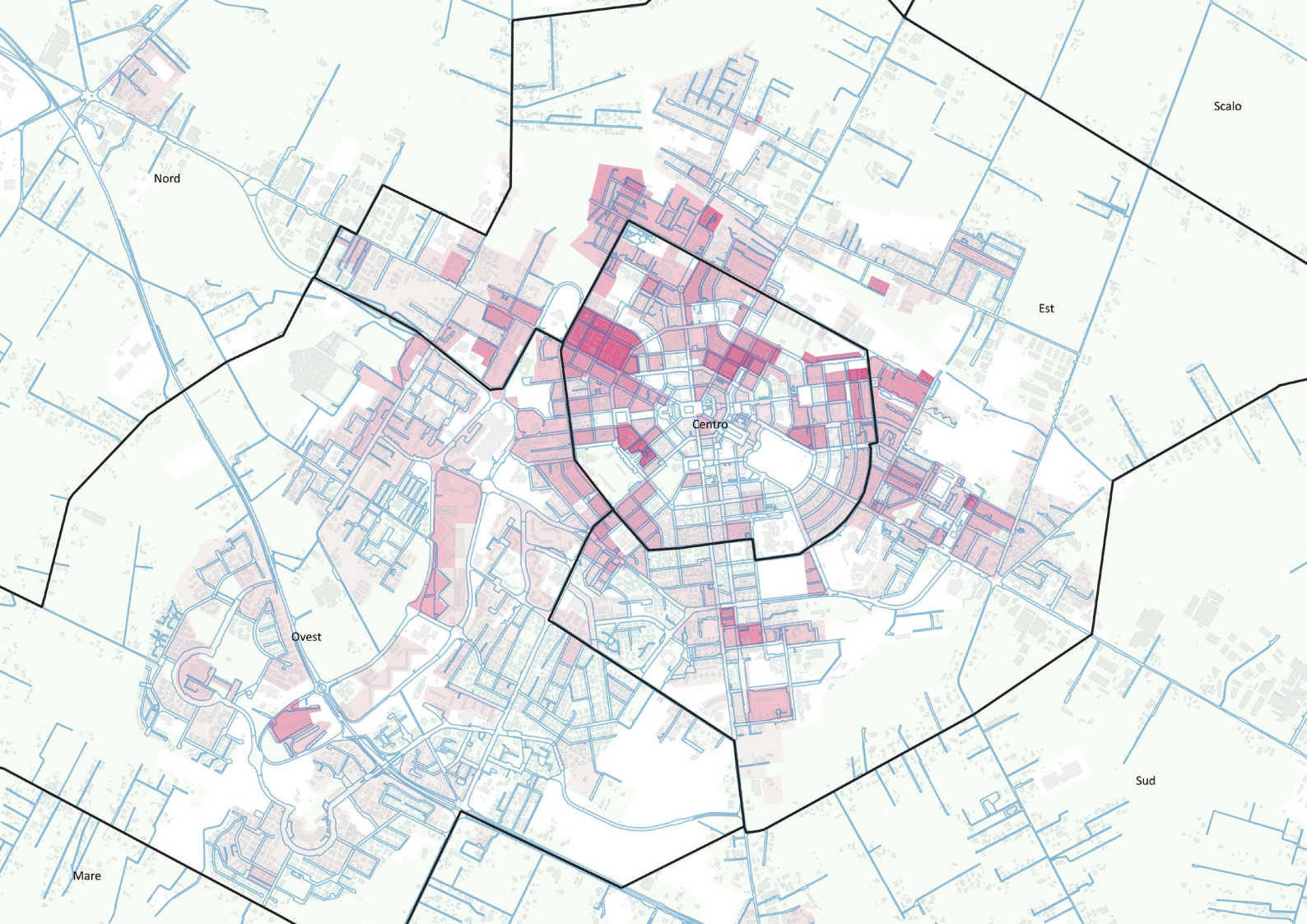
Foreign background people

Foreign people represent 9,4% of the overall population in Latina. This percentage is higher in the young age range (13,01%).

Foreign residents tend to concentrate in the center of Latina, in particular in Campo Boario, in Frezzotti and in Scalo Latina and Borgo San Michele.

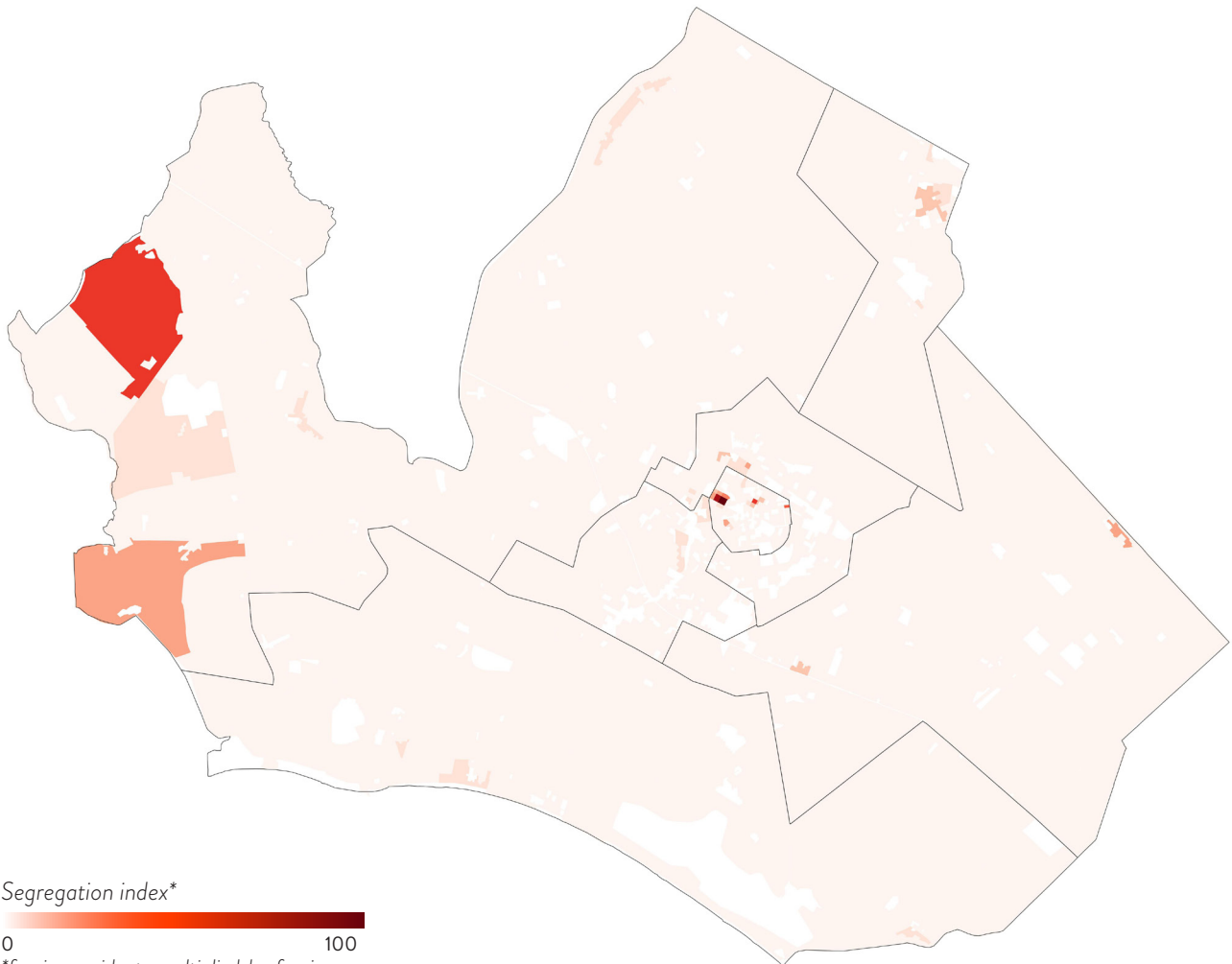
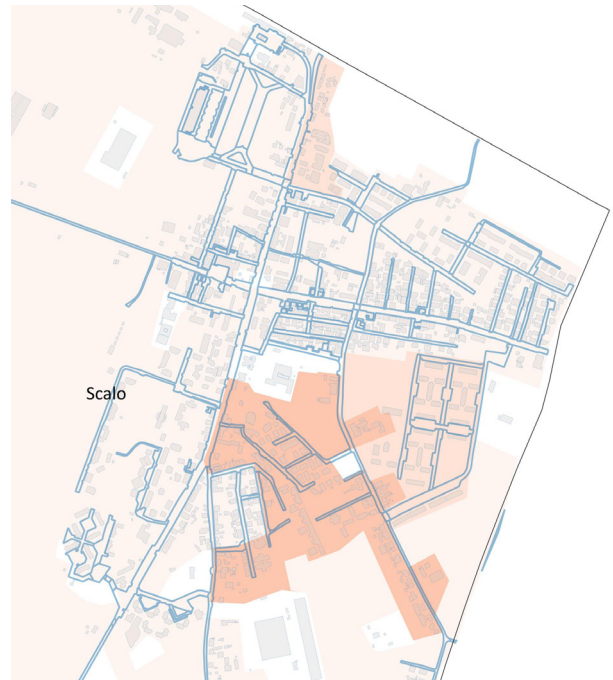
The most represented origin nations are Romania, India, Ukraine, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Poland and China.





Foreign people segregation

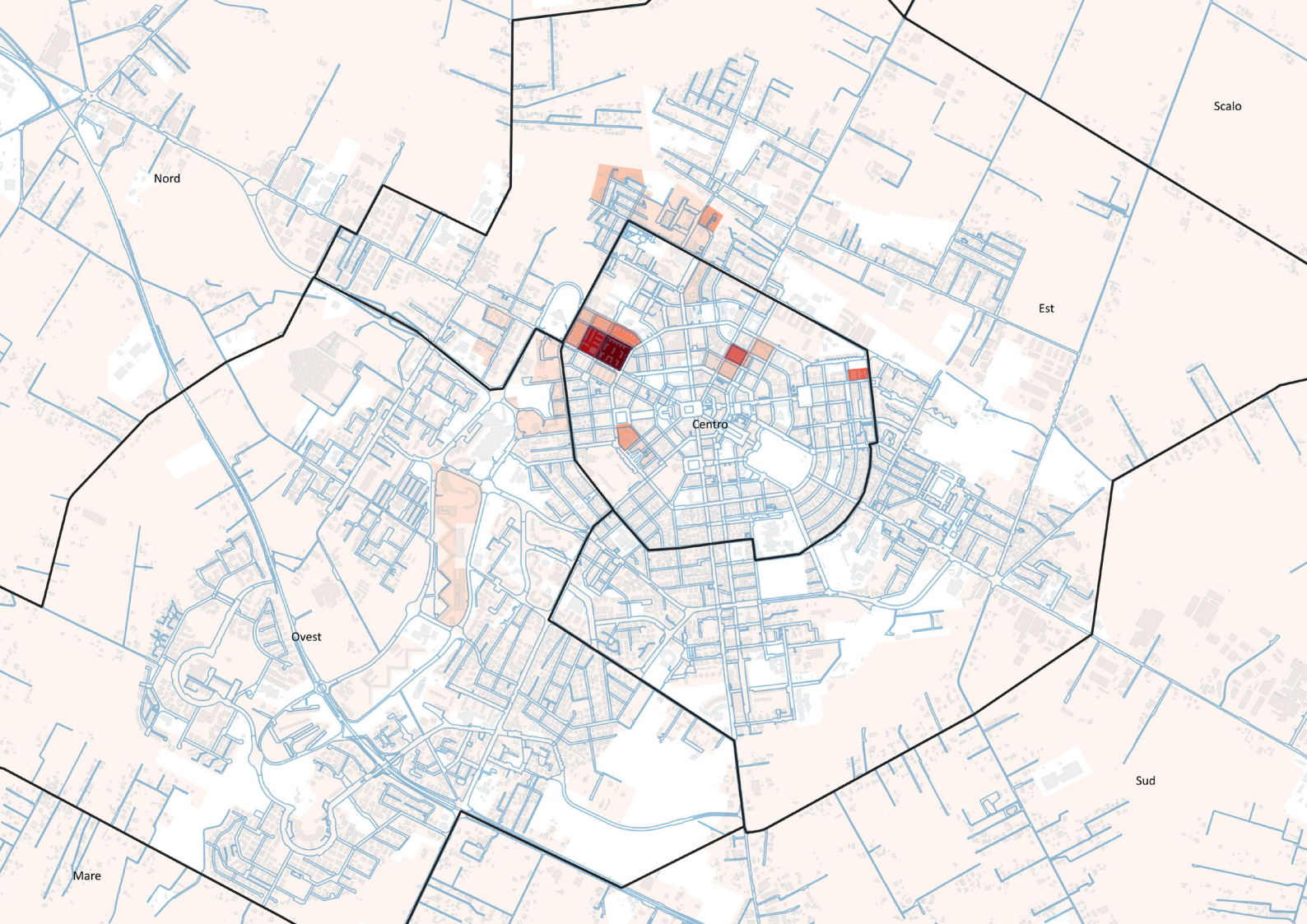
Foreign people tend to concentrate in specific areas of the territory of Latina. From the elaboration based on ISTAT data, it was possible to highlight some areas where the percentage of foreign people is particularly high. In particular foreign people concentrate in some blocks in the west of the city center, in Scalo Latina and in some westside rural areas.



Segregation index*



*foreign residents multiplied by foreign on overall residents ratio in the census section

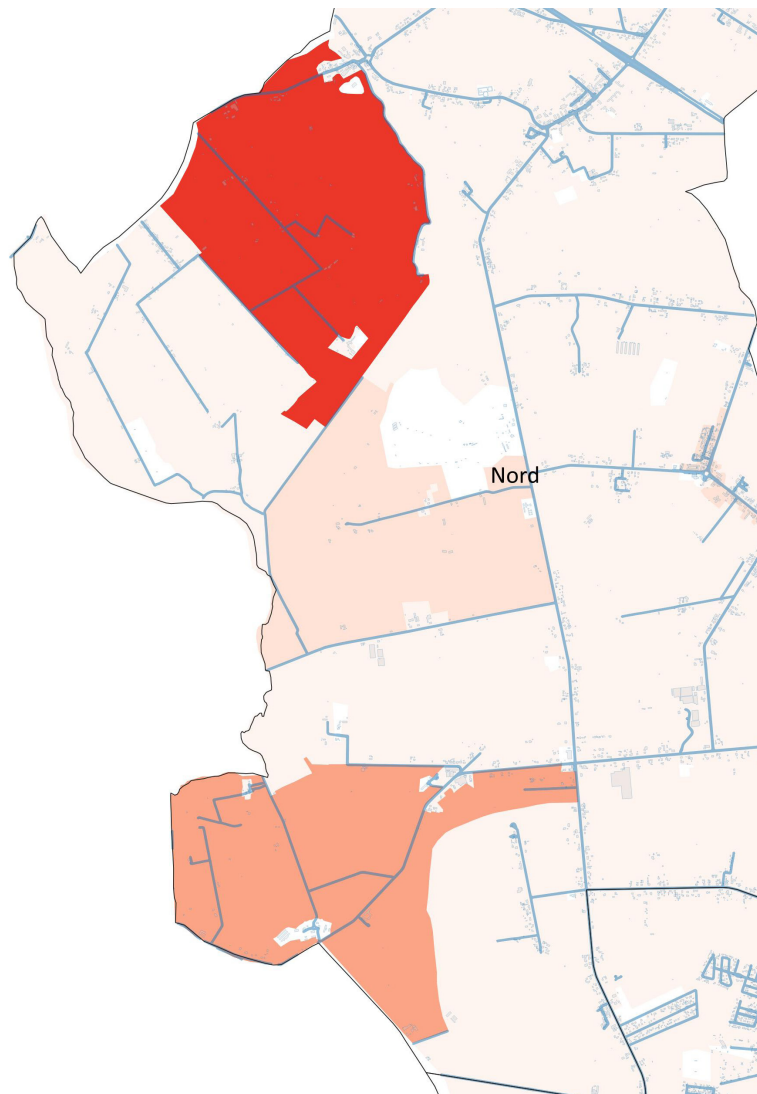


In the countryside of Latina, the shocking death of an exploited young Indian worker took place last summer.

Satnam Singh, a 31-year-old Indian farm worker left in agony on the street after losing his right arm in a work-related accident on a farm in Borgo Santa Maria, in the countryside of the province of Latina (Il-Sole24Ore, 2024b).

This episode shocked Italy and was intensively covered by Italian media for weeks. It generated protests and manifestations all over the nation and shed a light on the gang-mastering phenomena in several countryside areas in Italy.

As it can be seen on the right the area of Borgo Santa Maria shows a significant potential segregation index.



School drop-outs

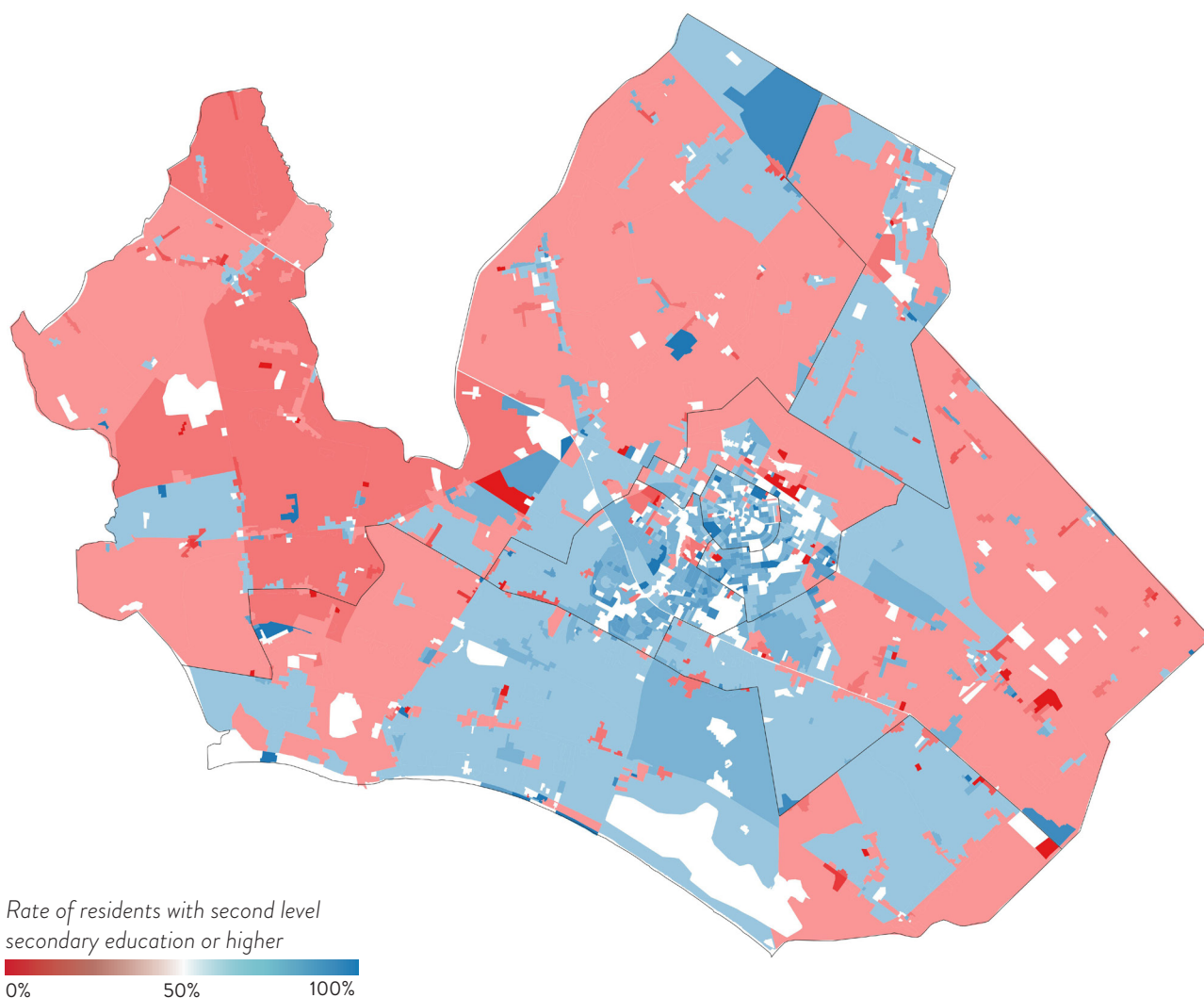
Around 42,9% of the residents in Latina hasn't graduated from second grade secondary schools.

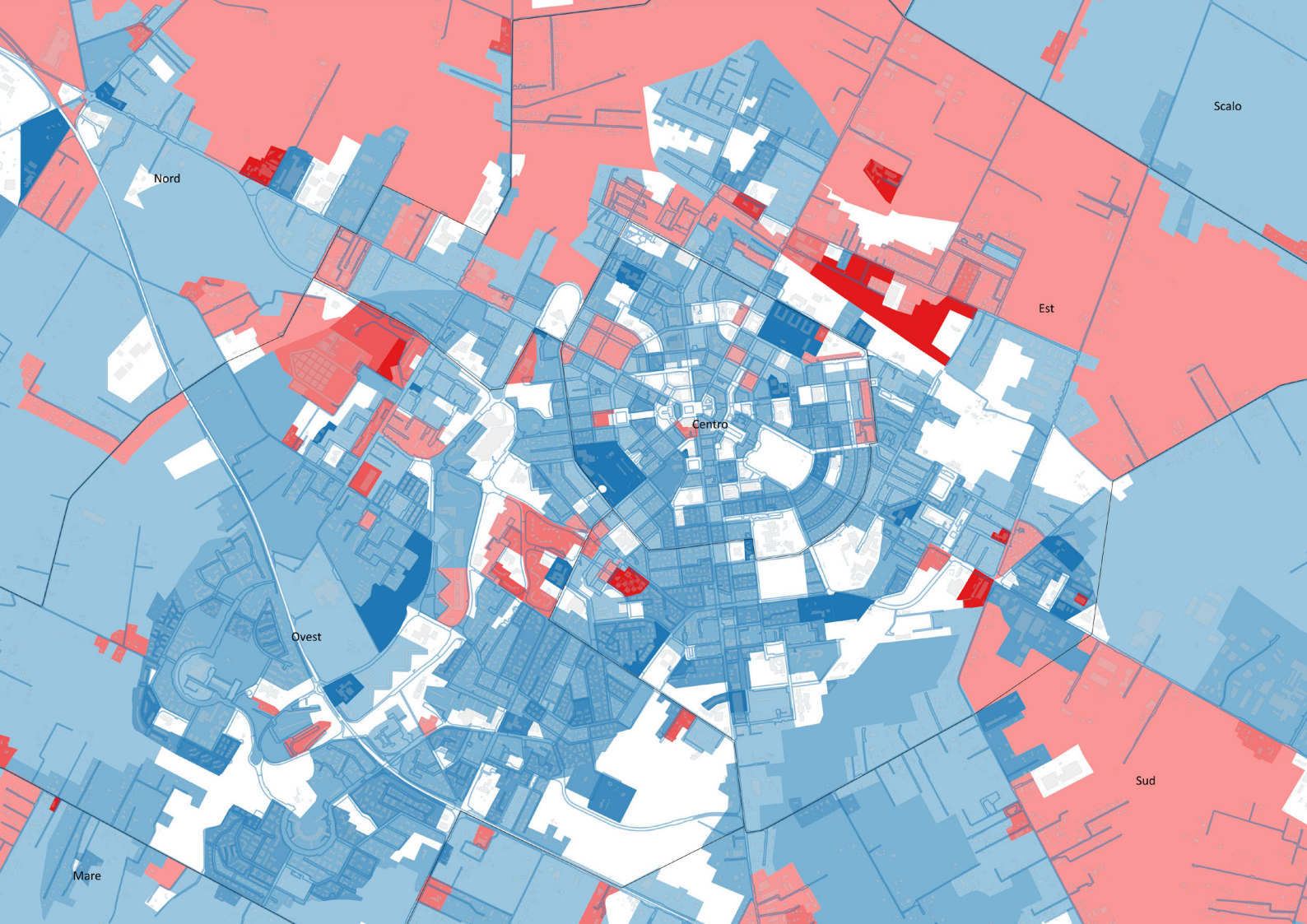
This underlines a situation that is slightly worse than the regional trend (40,8%).

Residents with lower education levels concentrate in the rural areas.

At province level, the high presence of NEETS and the low number of young people that graduated from university are one of the weakness of the province.

At province level criticalities emerge in terms of low presence of paediatricians, (92nd out of 107 provinces), low mathematical and linguistic skill of medium school children(84st and 81rd in 107 provinces), take-up rates of children in Early Childhood Education and Care Services (87th out of 107 provinces), low number of PNRR education projects (73rd out of 107 provinces).





Nevertheless, the province of Latina maintained the national standard for the social expenditure for families and minors (59th out of 107 provinces), and for the number of crimes against minors (37th out of 107 provinces).

An overall view of the quality of life for children sees the province of Latina performing quite poorly (93rd out of 107). The quality of life for young people was deemed extremely poor too (91th out of 107) (Il Sole 24 Ore, 2024).

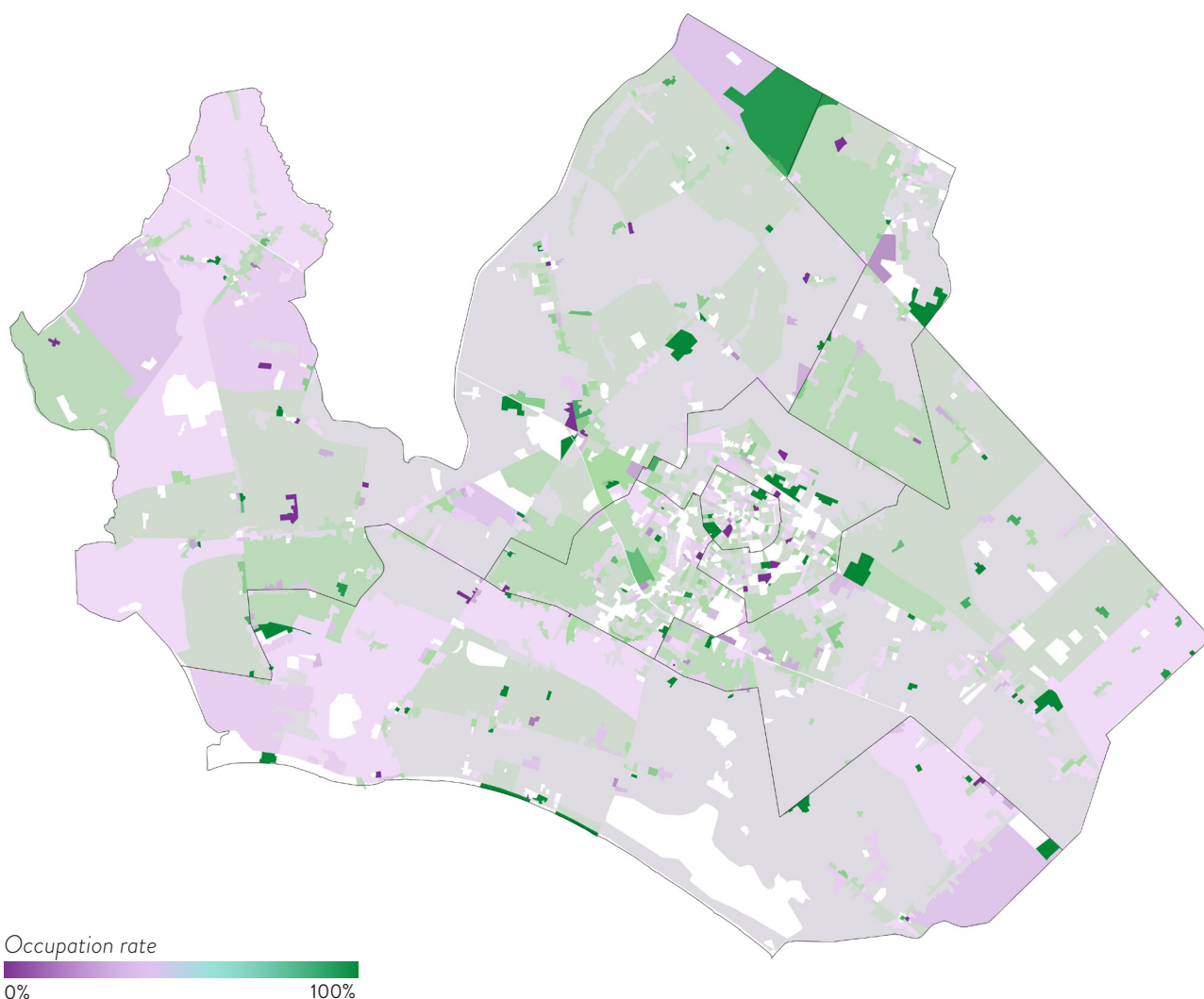
Occupation

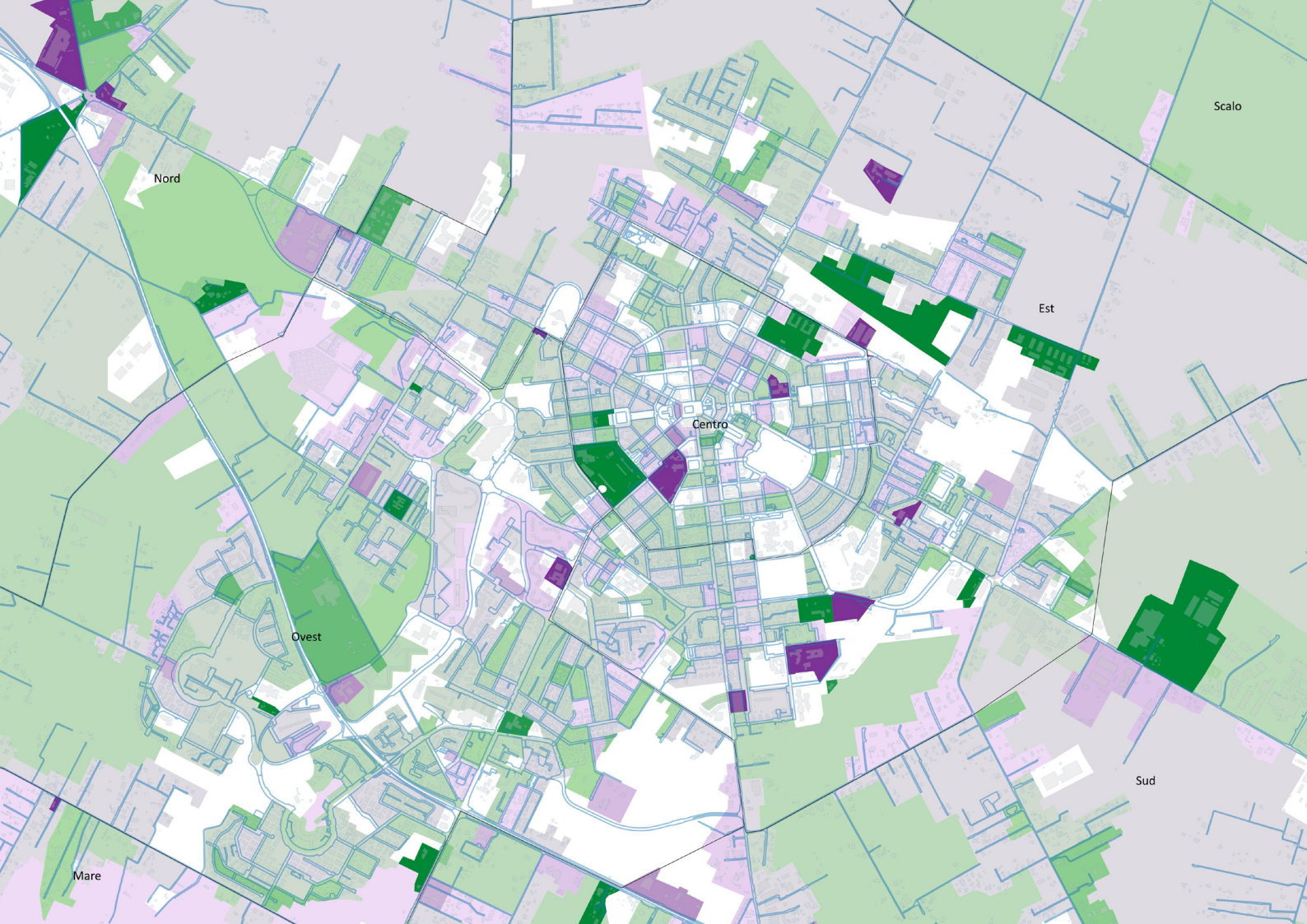
In 2021 the occupation level in Latina was 59,8% which was slightly more than the national average 59% (ISTAT, 2021a) but lower than the regional average 60% (ISTAT, n.d.a).

At province level the rate lowers under the national average (56,2%).

Services are the main sector of employment (68,1%), followed by agriculture and primary activities (12,57%) and manufacturing (12,27%)(ISTAT, 2021).

In the last century after the reclamation of the marshland, the Agro Pontino region became known as “Italy’s granary”, and its agricultural vocation is still very relevant.





The main industrial sectors in the province are pharmaceutical, chemical, agri-food, dairy, metallurgical and precision mechanics.

Between 2007 and 2015 employment rate went down significantly especially in the 15-24 age range and started to recover between 2019 and 2022.

Even if the overall employment rate went up in the last 20 years at province level (+1.9%), it went down by 7,2% for 15-24 age range and 4,9% for 25-34 age range.

Similar considerations can be made for the unemployment rate. Young people in the 15-24 age range suffered significantly the occupational crisis of recent years reaching a 43,50% unemployment rate in 2015. In the following years the rate recovered significantly but didn't reach 2007 level (overall unemployment rate went up by 1%, 0,9% for the 15-24 age range and 5,1% for the 25-34 age range).

YOUTH POLICY SUBSYSTEM

Institutional level: municipal frame in charge of youth policies

Youth policies in the Municipality of Latina are coordinated by the Youth Policies and Sport Service, which is part of the Fifth Department - Public schools, Culture, sport and youth policies. The Service promotes and manages initiatives and projects in the field of sports and leisure, promotes enhancement of sports associations, Support for the right to sport, with particular focus on disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, initiatives for promoting physical activities youth policies, youth forum, youth information desk, school-work alternation programs and universal civil service.

The Councillor responsible for youth policies for the Municipality of Latina is Andrea Chiarato . Its mandates are the following: Sports promotion, Relations with sports and youth associations, Sports facilities and their management, Youth policies, Planning and management of events and exhibitions, Personnel policies and workplace safety.

The council was established in June 2023, with the new center-right Administration led by Mayor Matilde Celentano.

The municipality promoted several activities to target youth needs:

Informagiovani is an infopoint for youth in the 15-34 age range. The infopoint was born in 1997 and now also operates as a Local Eurodesk and Eures center. It promotes information, orientation and participation in the cultural and social local life.

It operates in four main areas which are:

- Area 1 - Art, Culture, Tourism, Leisure, Environment and Sport
- Area 2 - School/University - Training/Work
- Area 3 - Ecology and Health
- Area 4 - Legality and Active Citizenship

For each Area, the help desk provides a proactive service to users, organized into two levels: the first, a front office, manages incoming and outgoing information and guides users to services; the second, a back office, offers listening and support in developing and preparing personalized solutions (Informagiovani Latina, n.d.)

Porta Futuro Lazio (PFL) is a public, free initiative by the Lazio Region in partnership with local universities, designed to help individuals grow professionally. The project offers career guidance and training services to improve participants' employability and market positioning. Currently, there are 10 offices across Lazio, one in Latina in the university residence Villafranca, making it easier for citizens and businesses to access the innovative, no-cost services of the "PFL" model.

The PFL office, offers range of services available, and an initial needs assessment is conducted to explore their motivation and professional goals. They are then guided to the most suitable training or orientation services and are given access to the Porta Futuro Lazio software. This platform allows them to create a CV and send it, along with a cover letter, to companies with active job openings.

For businesses, PFL offers support in creating a virtual profile for posting job and training opportunities and identifying candidates who meet their needs. Offices also host Recruitment Days, Career Days, and Employer Branding events, offering companies a direct way to meet and engage with job seekers.

The "FARO" (Lighthouse/ I will) Project, managed by ENAIP NAZIONALE Impresa Sociale, is a significant initiative funded by the Municipality of Latina . The project aims to address the NEET phenomenon (young people aged 15-34 who are neither studying nor working) by integrating them into the workforce through specialized training courses and creative workshops (ENAIP, 2021).

The "FARO" Project began in November 2020 and is going to be concluded in the next months (Chiarato, 2024).

The project includes various activities focused on youth distress prevention and recovery, aiming to nurture young people's skills, potential, and creativity. It promotes their engagement, training, empowerment, and independence by creating spaces and opportunities for growth, educational actions, and community bonding.

Participation in the project's courses and workshops requires no formal education and is entirely free.

Courses offered cover diverse topics, from psychological support and practical skills to digital competencies.

The project also includes psychological support and job orientation services tailored to participants' needs.

A dedicated team of psychologists, professional educators, and career counsellors designs the project's activities based on the specific needs of each participant and tailors interventions to different age groups. Three Key Areas of Intervention were:

- **Psycho-Educational Counselling and Support** - This area is both the starting and ending point for all project activities, focusing on understanding each participant's life stage. From this foundation, the team helps set a personalized path for the participant's growth and development.
- **Professional Orientation and Training** - This area provides guidance, support, and mentoring to help participants shape their career paths. It includes substantial psycho-educational support to build self-esteem, motivation, and awareness of one's abilities.
- **Creativity Workshops** - This area creates creative spaces as reference points for personal and group development, promoting young people's active participation in community life.

Each participant remains in the program for up to a year, allowing for rotation in scheduled activities, completion of selected training or workshops, and the opportunity to publicly showcase their achievements (ENAI, 2021).

The project *Giovani e impresa – Il cibo nella terra del mito. Talenti da coltivare* (Youth and Business – Food in the Land of Myth: Cultivating Talents) officially launches with the goal of fostering youth entrepreneurship in the territory. Led by the Municipality of Latina, this initiative is a collaborative effort with the municipalities of Sezze, Bassiano, Cori, Maenza, Priverno, Rocca Massima, Sermoneta, Sonnino, and Norma.

It also includes numerous local partners, such as the Pacifici and De Magistris Higher Education Institute, Exo Latina Youth Association, Matutateatro Cultural Association, Confederazione Autonoma Italiana del Lavoro (Conf.A.I.L.), Agro Pontino Ecomuseum, the Giacomo Brodolini Foundation, and research center Impresapiens from Sapienza University of Rome.

The project engages young people aged 18-35, aiming to create a supportive environment for innovative, inclusive, and equitable youth entrepreneurship within the agro-food and tourism sectors.

To achieve this, it will establish a central hub for young entrepreneurs in Latina and satellite hubs in each of the nine partner municipalities.

This decentralized network will provide young people with tools to develop entrepreneurial skills and encourage a culture of digital and socially impactful business, especially in sectors linked to food production and tourism.

Thanks to a high national ranking, the Municipality of Latina secured a substantial national ANCI funding of €150,000, with an additional €37,500 in local co-financing for the project.

Open Hub Latina, is part of a project financed by Regione Lazio and the European Social Fund, located in Campo Boario, offers community services including educational and work support through various desks: Inforienta, Imprese, Inclusione Sociale, Informadonna, and School and University Orientation.

It also provides co-working, training, and conference spaces aimed at fostering social cohesion, local culture, and personal and professional growth in Latina's community. This initiative aims to connect residents with local resources and expand entrepreneurial and educational opportunities.

The Youth Forum was established by the Municipality of Latina in 2017 to serve as a bridge between the local government and residents, facilitating communication and engagement within the community.

The Youth Forum is about to be reopened by the current administration.

Councillor Di Matteo stated that "the Youth Forum did not give the desired results in terms of participation and contribution to the youth policies of the Municipality of Latina. In fact, for various reasons, not least the pandemic, the body, although regularly elected, has not produced concrete proposals and has shown a series of critical issues during its mandate" (Latinatu, 2024a).

One of the main focus in the previous mandate of the Forum concerned the proposals to candidate Latina as "Città Italiana dei Giovani per il 2021" (Italian youth city). Even if some criticalities emerged as mentioned by councillor Di Matteo, the forum was also a useful meeting point for young people. For example, Exo Latina was born in by the meeting of some of its founders inside the forum (Califano, 2024).

The program for 2024 Youth Forum indicates the following main focus, objective and actions.

For a better school

Promoting meritocracy and ensuring equal opportunities for all by fostering active collaboration with local public transport authorities and facilitating the organization of used school textbook markets to alleviate educational expenses.

Culture is freedom

To foster cultural independence among young people, the program outlines several initiatives aimed at reconnecting youth with cultural and civic life:

- Launching a digital “Forum Newspaper” to provide updates and foster engagement.
- Introducing the Cineforum in collaboration with schools, featuring film screenings followed by discussions.
- Organizing the “Forum Festival” in partnership with public and private entities in the culture and entertainment sectors.
- Scheduling interactive meetings between students from schools and universities with representatives from public institutions, private organizations, and the political sphere.
- Enhancing the link between schools and universities by establishing a tutoring service to support informed academic path choices.

Youth work and entrepreneurship

Promoting the development and flourishing of youth entrepreneurial activities by:

- Identifying a physical place where young entrepreneurs, or not yet such, can create an environment where they can meet and do networking, as well as being able to come into contact with public and private bodies operating in the various sectors of interest to young people.
- Startup incubator: Collaborate with the municipal administration and the region to open a youth startup incubator and a co-working space that encourages the creation of innovative businesses by young people.
- Technology hub for youth entrepreneurship: Launch a project to support digital youth entrepreneurship, with spaces dedicated to the development of apps, digital platforms and innovative projects.
- Bring young people closer to the world of entrepreneurial activity through intense cooperation with schools and universities, through meetings, work and joint operations with public and private entities operating in the sectors of interest.
- Collaborate with the municipal administration to facilitate local youth entrepreneurial activity at a bureaucratic and legal level.
- With particular attention to initiatives in the cultural field, and daytime and night-time entertainment, in order to seriously promote, and with an approach close to youth, the development and active and interested participation in the cultural and economic life of the city by the city’s youth component.
- Establish financial training courses, starting from schools, for young people in order to prepare them for the new reality in which they will be immersed.
- Launch an evaluation process in the field of municipal bonds, in order to assess their concrete feasibility and define their potential as a financing tool for youth businesses.

Borghi di fondazione (Founding Villages)

Valorisation of Latina’s Borghi as a root element of local identity and cultural heritage, through the creation of listening tables with:
Engagement with Local Transport Authorities: Improve transportation links between the Borghi, the city center, and the seaside, ensuring better

connectivity, especially for young people during the summer.

Dialogue with Youth from the Borghi: Provide a platform for young residents to voice concerns, identify challenges, and propose potential solutions.

Additionally, the program will collaborate with the municipal administration to organize more events celebrating the Borghi and their history, with particular emphasis on the city's upcoming centenary.

Active citizenship

The primary objective is to engage the youth of Latina in local decision-making processes and community life. The following actions outline this goal:

- Establishment of a Youth Observatory, in partnership with the municipal administration.
- Allowing youth participation as observers in Municipal Commissions on issues relevant to elected representatives from the Forum, ensuring that young voices are heard in key decisions, particularly in areas that directly impact them.
- Launching an information campaign to promote active citizenship (Comune di Latina, 2024c).

Lastly, the Municipality played an important role in the project Latina D'Amare which will be analysed in details in the next pages.

Relevant non-institutional actors usually involved across all local youth policies

Latina is the second city in this report in terms of number of third sector entities compared to the population. (2,85 ETS for every 1.000 residents) (RUNTS, 2024). There's a high presence of social promotion associations (1,62 for every 1.000 residents) while the presence of social enterprises is the lowest among the cities in the report (0,37 for every 1.000 residents).

An important associational point of reference is Spazio Culturale Nicolosi (cultural space). The socio-cultural hub tries to revitalize Nicolosi neighbourhood offering a variety of services and socio-cultural initiatives (RAI Cultura, 2024). The space is open to all Third Sector associations that share its aims, objectives, projects and, above all, its spirit.

"Angolo di Chirone" associations organises after-school services for the neighbourhood youth and children.

As part of the LGNetEA project, an important collaboration agreement was established with the Astrolabio Social Cooperative. Co-financed by the European Union's Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (FAMI), the project is led by the Italian Ministry of the Interior, with institutional and technical support from ANCI and Cittalia, and includes contributions from eighteen Italian municipalities. Its objective is to enhance community well-being in areas with significant populations of foreign-born residents who have not yet reached full integration, promoting quicker, more effective paths to social inclusion.

Upcoming initiatives include launching an informational and support desk in collaboration with SAIP Formazione e Lavoro (training and work). This service will address employment-related issues and provide guidance on job opportunities. It aims to assist job seekers with valuable resources, with

a focus on skill development through free training courses offered by the national “GOL” program, funded by Italy’s PNRR.

The space also hosts, reading groups, collectives, cultural associations and neighbourhood committees. (Spazio Culturale Nicolosi, n.d.)

In particular, the project @tNicolosi, in collaboration with Lestra Associations is the main cultural event series that animates the center since 2022, with live events, music, art, contemporary dance, prose theatre and street theatre (Ibid.).

Sottoscala9 (Understairs 9) is a cultural association and music venue located at Via Isonzo 194 in Latina, Italy. It operates as a prominent center for live music, art exhibitions, and community-focused activities, with a mission to promote local culture and provide a space for alternative music and artistic expressions. As a hub for rock, indie, and electronic music events, it regularly features both Italian and international artists, making it a well-regarded venue for live performances in the region.

The venue also functions as a social and creative space, hosting events, exhibitions, and collaborations that engage the local community. This aligns with the ethos of many similar cultural spaces aiming to enhance community well-being and foster connections among young people and artists (Sottoscala9, n.d.).

Exo Latina, is a non-profit organization founded in 2021 in Latina, Italy, with a mission to support youth and counteract brain drain through innovative projects focused on local economic development. It promotes sustainable growth in areas affected by youth migration, connecting young talents under 35 with opportunities to create change and engage in impactful community projects. One of its flagship initiatives, Exodus Community, that sees the organisation of meetings with enterprise managers and CEOs.

The association organizes events, collaborates with schools, and encourages young people to pursue entrepreneurial projects that uplift local communities. By creating a network for youth and promoting innovation in peripheral regions, Exo Latina aims at building skills and employment options for youth .

The organisation was founded by 5 young students from Latina, with background in STEM subjects and Economics. Now, it also operates at national level, in particular a strong satellite community is active in Molise region.

The organisation has strong links with local enterprises that collaborate in their initiatives and economically contribute to their work (Califano, 2024).

Role of trade unions in the design and implementation of urban youth policies

CGIL tried to offer an important contribution in addressing youth needs through a collaboration with local associations for the project Lestrella Pop.

Lestrella Pop is a community space established by FILLEA CGIL and the Territorial Labour Chamber in partnership with various local associations, especially Quartieri Connessi, which has been active for years in the Q4 and Q5 neighbourhoods. This initiative was developed in collaboration with



*Lestrella Pop. (2024).
Performative poetry show*

young people, students, and socially engaged individuals and groups. It is an open space dedicated to serving the neighbourhood and it is accessible to everyone.

The program features a diverse array of community-focused initiatives and services, such as after-school support for children, a dedicated study room, painting and ceramics workshops, urban renewal labs, cultural events, film forums, discussions, and community gatherings (Latinatu, 2023).

Remarks on the urban policy subsystem

The urban policy subsystem in Latina, sees a pivotal role in the Municipality, that usually plays a support role and becomes a reference point for the initiatives. Councillor Chiarato during Latina's focus group "Youth policies are made by youth initiatives and economical resources mostly come from upper level calls (...) usually youth policy are not a priority in a municipality budget".

Latina is moving toward important milestones and targets such as the celebration of the Centenary of the city in 2032, the candidacy to Culture Capital 2026. These objectives are activating the social dialogue and will activate important economical and social resources;

so, considerations about youth must be included in the planning.

The reactivation of the Youth Forum can be a valuable consulting instrument that allows young people in Latina to get together, elaborate proposals and be heard by the municipality.

Diversified resources inside the municipality, among youth, associations and informal groups must be activated with the right timings in order to integrate proposals with holistic consideration and make the most out of every initiative.

Some of the youth associations in Latina are well connected with the productive fabric of the territory.

Trade unions and in particular CGIL, play an important role in supporting the associative life in peripheral neighbourhoods of Latina such as "Q4" and "Q5".

Even if regional and upper level calls have been able to make some youth questions emerge and be directly addressed by youth themselves, a local level of general planning is needed to make individual initiatives coherent and not redundant.

LATINADAMARE

The Municipality of Latina, by securing funding through the Lazio Region's "Itinerario Giovani" (youth itinerary) grant program, aimed at supporting the creation, enhancement, and promotion of spaces dedicated to attracting youth tourism, has presented the project "LatinaDAmare".

Topics

The project envisions creating a network of interconnected spaces and services aimed at enhancing the experience of the Pontine area, promoting its value. It is built around three key pillars: the sea, music, and culture.

Beneficiaries - Target group

The tourism and hospitality activities and the cultural programs in the spaces, are managed by organizations led by young people under 35 years of age, who revitalized these spaces, attract young visitors, and engage local youth communities.

In the case of Latina, the initiative was managed by "Seaside Music Young" youth enterprise.

Contents

Policy goals

The "Itinerario Giovani" initiative aimed to support the opening and enhancement of public spaces to be revitalized and dedicated to young people under 35. Buildings, offices, schools, barracks, and stations across the municipalities of Lazio—all underused or unused spaces—could be transformed into dynamic hubs for youth energy.

This led to the creation of 20 new youth centers throughout the region, including 2 hostels and 2 activity spaces in each province of Lazio.

Policy instruments

The total funding available at the beginning of the program was 5.2 million Euros, with an additional investment of 500.000 Euros dedicated to organizing youth-focused activities within the Santa Severa Castle Hostel and the Palazzo Doria Pamphilj in San Martino al Cimino, both owned by the region. The project is supported by funding from the Prime Minister's Office.

The Region funded top projects created by young people for those under 35, with grants up to a maximum of 288.000 Euros. In 2022, 25.000 have been added to the resources for each project.

Expected results

In 2019 municipalities and public entities nominated spaces for redevelopment, and submitted a renovation plan along with a cultural/tourism activation project lasting at least two years.

In Latina, to realise the three themes (sea, music and culture), various "Rest Points" have been created, forming a network of three interconnected hubs: one coastal hub and two urban hubs. Together, these hubs provide young people with cultural and recreational opportunities. Lastly, the project also planned the realisation of a musical festival with national level artists.

Achieved results

Art: The “Il Gabbiano” printing house, a symbolic and representative building in the city of Latina, had lost its original functions over time, though its architectural features have remained unchanged.

The municipal administration decided to establish one of five Neighbourhood Centers at the former “Il Gabbiano” printing house, offering new services to the community. This initiative aims to enhance and secure peripheral areas through co-management of municipal spaces and foster a network for organizing social, cultural, sports, and recreational events.

On October 14, 2022, one of the “LatinaDAmare” project’s Rest Points was inaugurated: the ARTE multi-purpose hall, a new urban hub dedicated to artistic, cultural, and musical activities.

LatinaDAmare offers the ARTE Rest Point space to support artists in starting or continuing their artistic work.

Since 2022, the project has fostered collaborations with various local curatorial associations, such as Fabio D’Achille’s MAD_Exhibition and Rossana Calbi’s Strange Opera.

Additionally, artists can connect directly with the project, whether for canvas works or photography exhibitions, the flexibility of the ARTE Rest Point provides an ideal setting to showcase and enhance each artist’s work.



*LatinaDAmare. (n.d.).
ARTE Culture – Event – Music*

F. Ianiri, one of the founders of Seaside Music Young, stated that the printing house hosted about one new art exhibition every month (Ianiri, 2024). The activities carried out in this space were much more diverse and frequent than expected: music shows by local youth were organised every week (the space can host a maximum of 100 spectators), book presentations were hosted. The space is also rented to other organisations, to host events (Ibid.).

A free co-working service and a coffee shop has been launched for users under 35 at the Art Rest Point.

Music: In May 2022, the Rest Point for artistic and musical activities, as outlined in the LatinaDAmare project, was inaugurated. Through renovation and adaptation work on the building adjacent to the Casa Cantoniera (roadhouse) in Borgo Sabotino, a new community space was created, offering a rehearsal room and recording studio for public use.

Sea: In September 2021, the Paka'a Beach Club was inaugurated. This new hub is dedicated to seasonal tourism, the implementation of policies focused on legality and transparency, and the promotion of sports and cultural activities.

The Beach Club is hosted in a kiosk that was seized from criminal organisations. In 2017, two companies gave up their rights to the public concession. Believing that intimidation may have played a role, Mayor Coletta filed a report against unknown parties, which allowed him to assign the



(LatinaDAmare, 2024.)
Paka'a Beach Club

kiosk through a public notice, effectively incorporating it into the “LatinaDAmare” project. In 2023, the kiosk was set on fire (CGIL Frosinone Latina, 2023). The association was able to reopen the beach club the next year. The removable structure is assembled in may and removed in September (Ianiri, 2024). The activities of the beach club are limited by Circeo National Park’s regulations, that insist in the area, and do not allow noise and light pollution activities after the sunset (Ianiri, 2024).

Latina Music Festival: the festival took place between October the 28th and October the 31th in 2022, allowing 50 local artists and 3 national artists to perform (LatinaDAmare, n.d.c). The fees for national level artists absorbed about half of the overall resources for LatinaDAmare (Ianiri, 2024).

To understand the importance of the festival it must be noted that Latina is one of the Italian provinces with the lowest rate of concerts compared to the youth population: on national average, 53,2 concerts are organised for every 10.000 young residents (18-35 years old), in Latina in 2022 the data was only 15,9 (102th out of 107 provinces) (ISole24Ore, 2024). In 2022, Latina was the last province in Italy for participants to cultural events (ISole24Ore, 2023).

The music initiatives continued after the festival with “Dopofestival” that took place in the Art rest point (LatinaDAmare, 2023c).

The actors

Promoter and financier

Co-designer

Other subjects involved

Interactions

The network of actors was open and relatively stable, with a leading role of the Seaside Music Young .

LatinaDAmare established a reference point not only for youth, but in general for associative life in Latina.

The interactions generated by this initiatives were more diversified than expected as the regenerated spaces, especially the Art Rest Point was able to provide a meeting place that Latina needed, offering space for associations to organize events and opportunities for the youth in Latina to express themselves in various ways

Policy networks

From the point of view of the policy network, LatinaDAmare is configured as an urban “pure” youth policy. The promoter of the initiative was the Municipality of Latina, in particular the Youth Policies and Sport Service. Three officials and one director for the service assisted Seaside Music Young in the realisation, spending of resources and reports (Ianiri, 2024).

The municipality applied to “Itinerario Giovani” regional call, selecting some of its properties, to be managed by youth associations.

It must be noted that the buildings were not fit to host some of the activities that were planned in the program of the project. For example, bigger events (for up to 200 spectators) were not realised because fire safety regulations and lack of adequate ventilation systems in the buildings. Furthermore, the beach club could not host night events due to Circeo National Park regulations (Ianiri, 2024). This indicate a lack of adequate communications between different sectors of the public administration in the planning phase of the project, in particular the Territory and urban regeneration department could have better oriented the policy choices .

Seaside Music Young was the main actor in the project design, realisation and management.

The association was able to activate a wide and diverse network of actors and propose a variety of activities much wider than firstly planned.

Municipality of Latina , Regione Lazio

Seaside Music Young

Local Associations, CGIL, Professional orders

Remarks and Comments

LatinaDAmare distinguished itself for its capability to fill the gap in the cultural offer in Latina, thanks to the concerts, and the various exhibitions and cultural initiatives.

Even if some criticalities emerged from the technical limits of the regenerated spaces, the association was able to meet the expected results of the program and go even further offering a continuous and various set of initiatives and sustaining the spaces with incomes coming from various activities.

YOUTH IN THE FUTURE

Every year, ISTAT elaborates demographical previsions on the population of Italian municipalities. These previsions allowed us to elaborate previsions that focus on youth population.

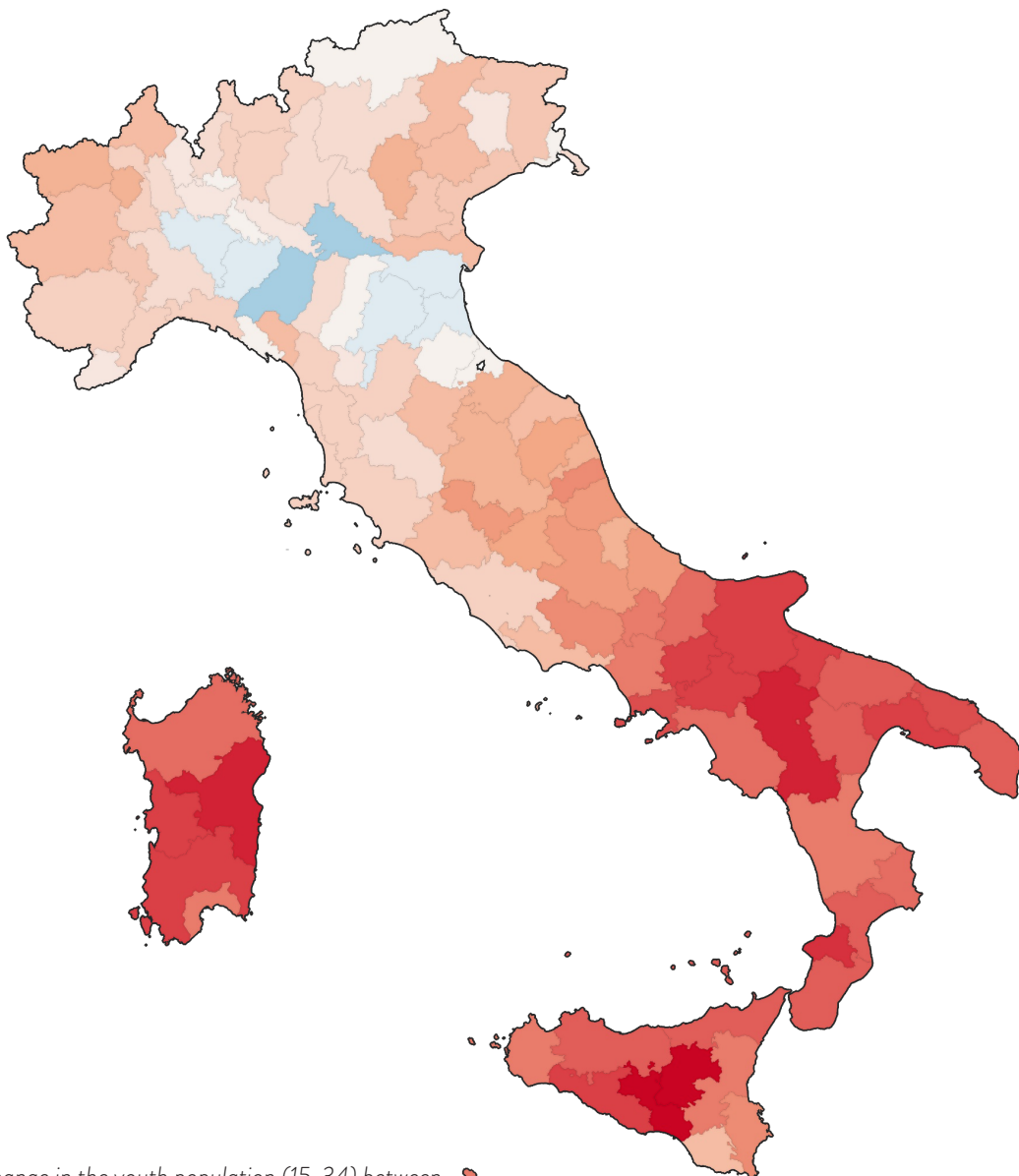
At national level, a general shrinking will affect the population bringing it down from 58,6 million in 2023 to 56 million in 2042 (-4,44%), and then to 46,1 million in 2080 (ISTAT, 2024c). Shrinkage will affect more significantly the youth population.

In the first map, that analyses the difference between the expected youth population in 2043 and the pop-

ulation in 2023. we see how the phenomena is expected to be unequally distributed between north and south. Only in Lombardy, Emilia Romagna and Tuscany there will be provinces in which youth population slightly increases (no more than 2%).

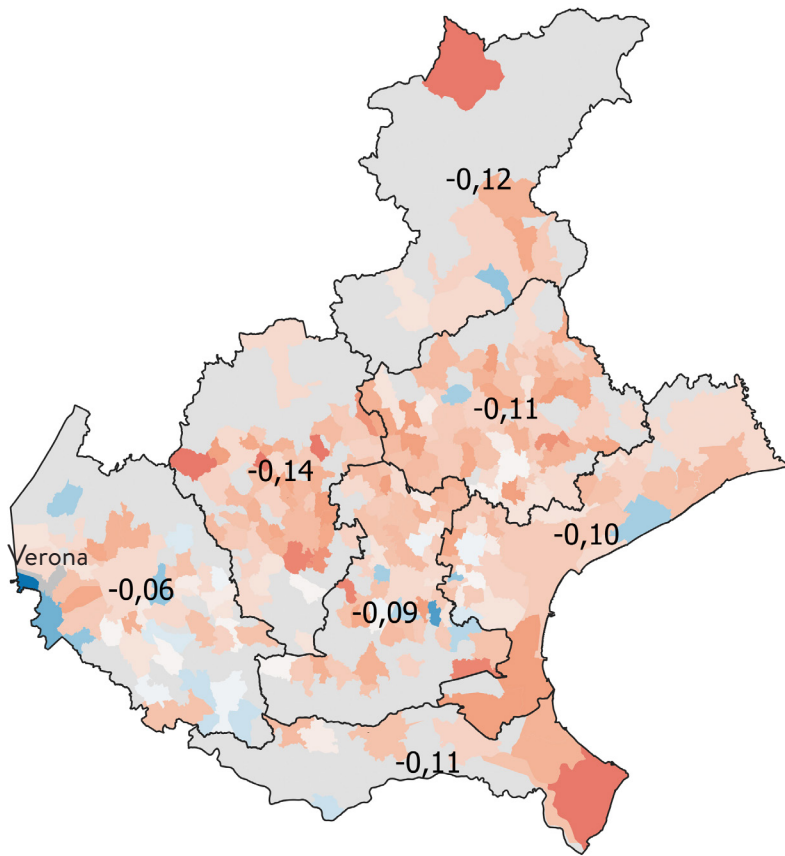
In particular youth population will go up in Mantova, Pavia, Parma, Ferrara and Prato.

While Youth shrinkage will strongly affect the south with peak exodus in Enna and Caltanissetta (-37%) in Sicily, Potenza (-33%) in Basilicata, Nuoro (-33%) in Sardinia and Vibo Valentia (-31%) in Calabria.

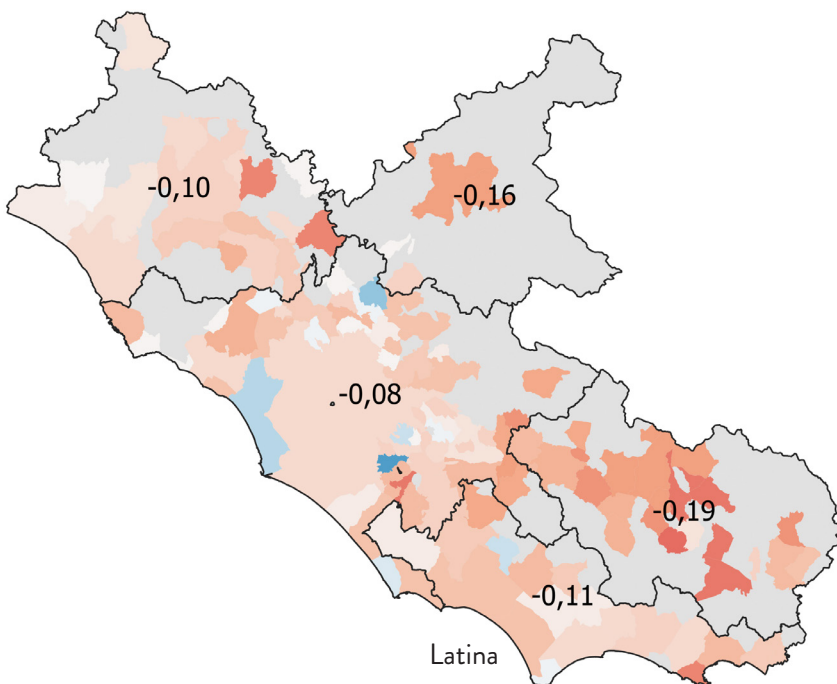


Foreseen change in the youth population (15-34) between 2023 and 2043- Province level





Verona is the only city in this report where ISTAT foresees a demographical growth in the next 20 years (ISTAT, 2024c). Both the city and the province of Verona are expected to have a slight increase in the population (+1.76% in the city with 4.511 more units, and +2.39% in the province with 22.174 more units). Nonetheless, even if the overall population will grow, the youth population (15-34) is expected to go down by 4.224 units (-8,65%), especially in the age ranges 15-19 and 19-24 (Ibid.). 25-29 age range will slightly grow at province level by 1,76% and 30-34 age range will grow at province level (+8,89%) and maintain its level at city level (+0,36%).



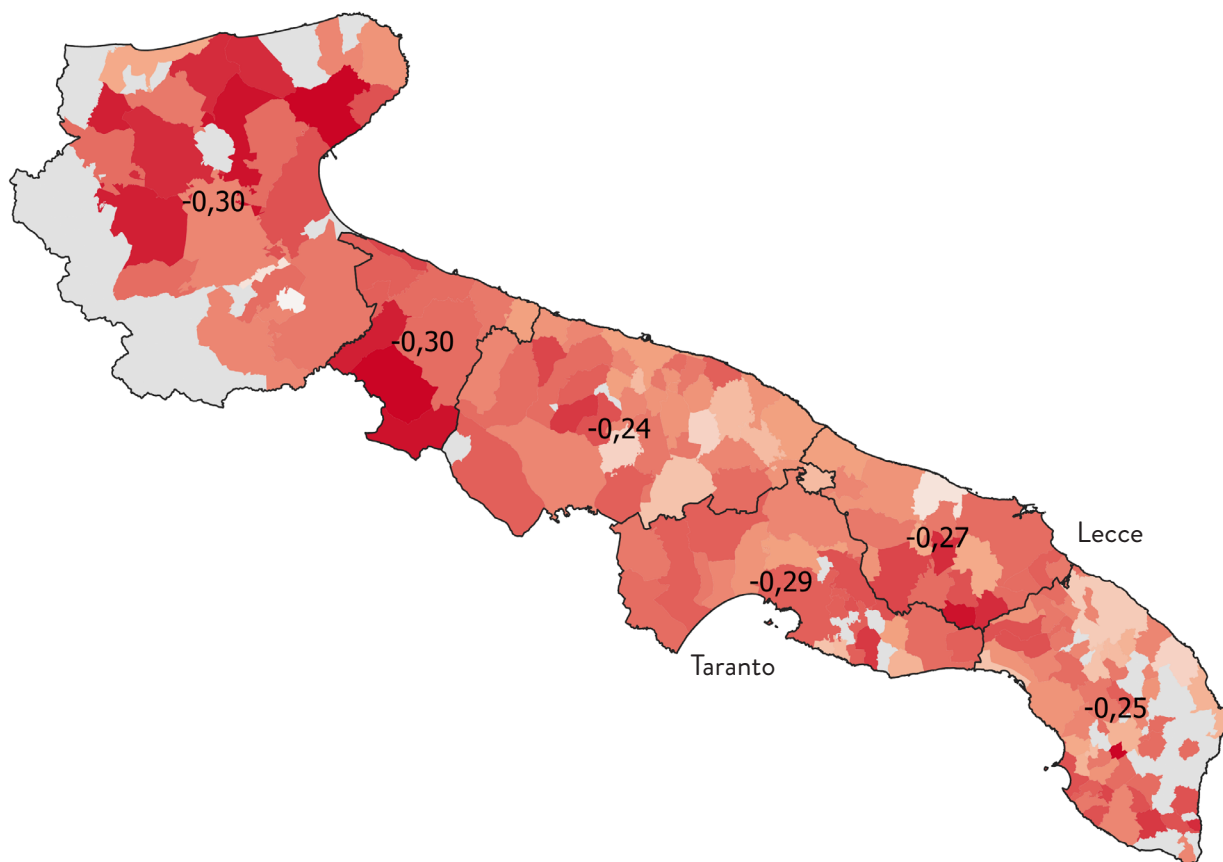
Latina's population is expected to slightly decrease by 3,3% (-4.203 units) in the city and 2,6% in the province (-14.731%). The shrinking in the youth population will be more intense: -12,9% in the city (-3.428 units) and -10,7% in the province (12.591 units). the shrinking will strongly affect the age range 15-19 (-33% in the city and -27% in the province) and 20-24 (-22,2% in the city and -17,5% in the province). Nevertheless, a slight increase is expected in the 30-34 range (+5.57% in the city and 2% in the province)(Ibid.).

Foreseen change in the youth population (15-34) between 2023 and 2043 - Municipal level



Residents in the city of Lecce are expected to go down by 4% (-3.277 units) in the next 20 years. In the province the decrease will be more significant (-11,8%, 90.233 units). The shrinking will be much more severe in the youth age range (-10,3%, 1.835 units in the city and -25%, 38.830 units in the province). The most affected age ranges will be 15-19 years old(-20,5% at city level and -33% at province level) and 20-24 (-13,3% in the city and -30,1% in the province) (Ibid.).

Among the cities analyzed in this report, Taranto is the city that is expected to shrink more significantly. Overall residents will go down by 18,6% in the city (-34.679 units) and by 15% in the province (-82.823 units). Also in terms of young population decrease Taranto will see the most critical situation, losing 31,4% of its young residents in the city (-12.038 units) and 28,6% in the province (-32.984 units) (Ibid.).



Foreseen change in the youth population (15-34) between 2023 and 2043 - Municipal level



CONCLUSIONS

The cases of mid-sized cities considered in the Report exhibit very different characteristics, both in terms of their economic and social conditions and the dynamics of their youth populations. Broadly speaking, Lecce is a city where the phenomenon of young people “leaving” in search of better work and life conditions is quite significant, although the city overall fares better than other mid-sized centers in Southern Italy. Taranto, is the city in the report where the youth exodus is more intense and goes along with an overall urban crisis. Verona, on the other hand, is wealthy and attractive, particularly for university students but also for young workers from other areas in the Veneto region or other regions. Latina is a city where the criticalities that affect youth quality of life emerged and countered the potentialities of the city socio-economical context: even if the city grew in recent years, young people shranked, furthermore the city growth is expected to stop in the next years, and youth exodus is expected to steadily continue.

Despite these structural differences, all cities have implemented significant youth policies in recent years. In Lecce and Latina, this has been ongoing for at least a decade, partly due to experiments with interesting regional and upper level policies for young people, initiated in the 2000s. In Taranto some of the most interesting efforts came from regional and local associations initiatives, but the vibrancy of associative life and response to upper level calls is lower than Lecce's. In Verona, by contrast, the focus on youth living conditions and service needs is more recent, coinciding with a change in administration in 2022.

To assess whether these cities offer favourable environments for youth inclusion, two additional aspects must be considered. First, as shown by an analysis of the national youth policy system—marked by a lack of a national law and by varied importance of youth policies at the regional level (for example, in Apulia and Veneto)—a key challenge faced by municipal administrations is the absence of a clear framework of governance. This often limits the possibilities for effective local governance.

Furthermore the lack of a national law doesn't give full and unified legal recognition to youth workers strongly disincentivizing this activity. The future national law is supposed to recognize the role of youth workers and establish youth check in public governance and this will have a very beneficial impact on youth policies.

Second, the analysis of youth policy systems in the cities highlights a strong correlation between the complexity and density of the urban policy actors' network, and the effectiveness of youth-oriented urban policies. In Verona, for example, private non-profit actors like bank foundations (particularly Cariverona) provide an important resource for experimenting with innovative projects and policies. In Lecce, on the other hand, an openness to participatory and inclusive practices has strengthened the effectiveness of youth policies adopted by the previous administration, which recently changed. In Latina, a need to strengthen the connections between different local actors emerge, in order to more integrated initiatives. In Taranto, the urban policy network is less dense and less connected and this affects both the quantity and the integration of efforts.

In summary, all cities display some encouraging elements for establishing an effective youth policy framework, including a strong youth presence that plays a crucial role in both the design and implementation of these policies. However, analysis of the urban policy network and the specific networks of actors involved in each city also reveals significant challenges.

Firstly, a strong commitment from the City Council to urban youth policies is a positive feature in all cases, although the level of investment by the administrations has varied over different periods. In the last years, the appointment of a young Deputy Mayor for Youth Policies has undoubtedly been a strength in Verona and Latina. In Taranto, the Youth policy delegation has shifted to different councillors several times in recent years, and this could have been detrimental.

On the other hand, all cities have struggled to foster greater integration between the youth policy sector and other administrative sectors. This is especially detrimental for youth policies, which are necessarily integrated and multidimensional. Another consequence of the lack of cross-sector integration has been a tendency to prioritize “expression policies” (cultural policies, use of spaces, support for youth entrepreneurship) over “transition to adulthood policies” (active labour policies, training, as well as structural policies like housing).

As for the role of social actors, particularly labour unions, the analysis of policy networks in both cities shows that trade unions and business associations play a mostly indirect role. In Lecce, Verona, Latina and Taranto unions, especially CGIL, have recognized youth as an important urban issue but do not take a leading role in designing or implementing specific policies. However, the direct support offered by certain social actors to youth organizations provides important indirect contributions to the empowerment of policy beneficiaries and encourages their direct involvement as policymakers and implementers.

In conclusion, the success of urban youth policies in Italian cities hinges on strong political commitment and an effective technical interface capable of ensuring coordination and cooperation. Furthermore, cities with robust youth policies also tend to have more effective, integrated urban policies overall, ensuring necessary levels of integration between resources, actions, and interventions. Successful cases also feature strong youth engagement, supported by participatory processes in both the design and implementation of policies.

FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

Verona

Focus group

Comune di Verona: Jacopo Buffolo - Councillor for Youth policies and participation, Equal opportunities, Innovation, Historical memory and human rights, Digital transition

CGIL Verona: Francesca Tornieri - General secretary

CGIL Verona: Raffaello Fasoli - Secretary

Consiglio degli Studenti - Università di Verona: Laura Bergamin - Student representative

Circolo ARCI Yanez: Sofia Modenese - Coordinator

[Interview 1 - Rete Studenti Medi](#): Zoe Zevio - Representative

[Interview 2 - Circolo ARCI Yanez](#): Sofia Giunta - Representative

[Interview 3 - Comune di Verona](#): Jacopo Buffolo - Councillor for Youth policies and participation, Equal opportunities, Innovation, Historical memory and human rights, Digital transition

[Interview 4 - CGIL Verona](#): Francesca Tornieri - General secretary

[Interview 5 - CGIL Verona](#): Raffaello Fasoli - Secretary

[Interview 6 - Consiglio degli Studenti - Università di Verona](#): Laura Bergamin - Student representative

[Interview 7 - Circolo ARCI Yanez](#): Sofia Modenese - Coordinator

Lecce

Focus group

Provincia di Lecce: Andrea Romano - General director

Comune di Lecce: Andrea Guido - Councillor for Welfare, Social cohesion, Gender policies, Family policies, Food education, Plans for the elimination of architectural barriers, Reception, Integration, Accessibility, Labour policies, Equal opportunities, Civil rights, Animal protection, City care.

FP CGIL Puglia: Valentina Fragassi - Regional secretary

Fillea CGIL Lecce: Simona Cancelli - General secretary

Nidil CGIL Lecce: Sabina Tondo - Provincial coordinator

Sindacato Studentesco Lecce: Laura Perrone - Coordinator

Unione degli Universitari Lecce: Giovanni Caricato - Executive member

Unione degli Universitari Lecce: Sara Spano - Executive member

73100gaya: Gaia Barletta - Activist and culture worker

DiVagareAPS: Gabriel Mileti - Youth worker

[Interview 1 - DiVagareAPS](#): Andrea Sergio - Youth worker, coordinator

[Interview 2 - 73100gaya](#): Gaia Barletta - Activist and culture worker

[Interview 3 - Fillea CGIL Lecce](#): Simona Cancelli - General secretary

Taranto

Focus group

CGIL Taranto: Giovanni D'Arcangelo - General secretary

Officine Maremossio: Francesco Sisto - Project manager

Nasse Animation Studio: Nicola Sammarco - Project manager

Rete degli Studenti Medi: Andrea la Mura - Activist

Interview 1 - **Officine Maremossio**: Francesco Sisto - Project manager

Latina

Focus group

Comune di Latina: Andrea Chiarato -Councillor for Sports promotion, Relations with sports and youth associations, Sports facilities and their management, Youth policies, Planning and management of events and exhibitions, Personnel policies and workplace safety

Comune di Latina: Claudia Artuso - Official

Comune di Latina: Federica Bruni - Official

CGIL Frosinone Latina: Giuseppe Massafra - General secretary

CGIL Frosinone Latina: Anna del Vecchio - Secretary

CGIL Frosinone Latina: Filippo Vaccaro - Official

Giovani Democratici Latina Città: Carlotta Paladino - Secretary

Lestrella Pop: Luca Magazzino - Activist

Interview 1 -**Giovani Democratici Latina Città**: Carlotta Paladino - Secretary

Interview 2 - **Seaside Music Young**: Federico Ianiri - Project manager

Interview 3 - **Exo Latina**: Federico Califano - Founder

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