

## *Original Paper*

# Education and the Determinants of Early School Leaving in Campania

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### ***Abstract***

*Skills gaps between people and socio-economic groups persist over time and affect the future of generations.*

*Social change sees the relationship between education as a dynamic process, linked to “life long learning” and equity (Lisbon Commission, 2020) and the concept of human capital.*

*The analysis of such a correlation will be the subject of the study to highlight the reasons for early school leaving and the repercussions on the labour market in some disadvantaged territorial units of reference in Campania (Italy).*

*This regional context is characterized by a higher incidence of poverty, poor school performance and a less favourable condition of young people in the labour market.*

*The examination will focus on the northern suburbs of Naples.*

### ***Keywords***

*human capital, education, school, school dropout, youth distress, work, early school leaving*

## **1. Introduction**

Discussing education and human capital is an attempt to speak with other terms of social change, which must occur through a renewal of individual strategies and a rethinking of one’s own educational and work paths.

The definition of human capital by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), stated as: “The knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being” (Becker, 2009), represents a valid point of reference for the purposes of our analysis, as it looks at the multiple characteristics of human

capital and the factors that influence its level and evolution. Human capital is determined and increased, in fact, by school education (schooling) and by training on the workplace (training on the job), but also by other forms of learning closely related to education. Moreover, the learning function permeates individual life and therefore takes place in the family context or with peers, in workplaces, in informal learning in daily life or in civic engagement. Therefore, human capital becomes a multidimensional concept, embedded in individuals and in society. Heckman, speaking of human capital, focused on the concept of capabilities, arising from a multidimensional vision of the this latter. He believes that human capacities can be modelled in a decisive manner from an early age, by various environmental influences, first of all the prenatal ones, and then continuing in early childhood, in the family and in primary schooling. In summary, the main results of these studies show that a person's human capital is measured through the dynamic interaction between cognitive skills (measured by the intelligence quotient, what is learned at school) and socio-emotional—not cognitive like motivation, personality traits, capacity for self-control, concentration, perseverance, self-esteem, leisure preferences . The process of formation of cognitive and non-cognitive skills is influenced, as Coleman also argued in 1990, by the interaction between genetics and individual experiences, in particular by family background factors, which concern not only the professional condition but also the level of family education, the cultural capital of the family, the greater number of children in a family, and the availability of time that parents dedicate to their children to stimulate their sensitive, emotional and psychophysical growth. Regarding both cognitive and non-cognitive competences, differences can be found among people and among different socio-economic groups. These skills gaps among people and among socio-economic groups persist over time and affect people's future lives, helping to increase social inequality and to polarize the society, regardless of the consequences from an economic point of view, such as the drop in productivity, jobs and slowing growth.

Since learning is a dynamic process that is more effective if it begins the sooner (human capital being a process of accumulation that develops over decades), every corrective action undertaken today will only have an effect in many years. Therefore, policies of “investment” in educational resources and “support” to the families are needed as early as the preschool years to bridge the inequalities between rich families and poor ones and to positively influence the nature, the social consideration and the effectiveness of intervention policies. In this way, a primordial attempt will be made to get to an early identification of the various manifestations and facets of discomfort. It must be identified early to be able to reach social well-being. In fact, there is a silent and occult bond that often hides many truths but which strongly characterizes the binomial abandonment and deviance combination, difficult to measure only by the indicators represented in the social psychological and economic apparatuses.

Heckmann demonstrates that the most effective investments are those ones made in the first years of personal development, when the family takes on a decisive role. The author even argues that the failure to achieve high levels of education among young people in the lower classes depends on the failure to expand the right to education policies. He notes, in fact, that in most advanced nations education is

already substantially free and that the lack of access to the higher levels often depends on the low cultural conditions of the family rather than to the lack of scholarships.

Heckman's theories are also reflected in the legal context. Just as the parent has the right to maintain, teach and educate the children, "taking into account the abilities, natural inclinations and aspirations of the children" (art.30, co. 1 of the Constitution; art. 147, co. 1, cc)—rights that do not cease upon the coming of age, but which persist from birth until the children are able to act autonomously—so the State must give greater emphasis to policies to support learning in the pre-school period, as well as policies aimed at the recovery and training of adults.

The subject of training and learning concerns the parents, and therefore, certainly affects those that are the determinants of human capital related to the family background. However it is necessary to intervene ex ante on the generating causes of inequality, to positively influence growth and learning even in the later stages of people's lives.

The human capital, from a multidimensional point of view, can also be examined in the light of Amartya Sen's statements as an instrument aimed at favouring the expansion of capabilities also different from income, starting from the idea that human life is built by some fundamental operations (states of being or doing) to access to which the person must possess specific skills. A greater endowment of human capital, as also stated by the OECD (Note 1), in fact allows an improvement of the general conditions of life of the person, of his participation in the democratic productive processes, of his involvement in activities that do not have a direct economic remuneration.

To access the different dimensions of life that allow the attainment of adequate levels of well-being (Note 2) and therefore to the fundamental functioning, in Seniana's perspective, it is necessary to look at education as a determinant of the process of widening human possibilities, recognizing in the growth of human capital a formidable tool for the acquisition of those capabilities that make people "free to choose the kind of life they want". In other words, the educational system has a fundamental role: feeding other dimensions of well-being.

## **2. Method**

This work performed on 2019 in Naples, deals with the dispersion seen as a moment that starts the depletion of the human capital of the person, then the private and social returns linked to the investment in education will be analyzed. Then, it will focus on key dimensions that must be taken into account to support the educational system and, in particular, on the conditions and characteristics of the labour market because, obviously, the way the actors look to labour market influences relevantly the choices related to the very delicate moment of school-work transition and to one's own educational path in general.

In other words, the decision to undertake a course of study rather than another one or the decision to interrupt it or not, depends on a set of factors that pass through the influence of one's own family, of neighbourhood networks, of the peer group and of the models disseminated by the mass media; it is also

necessary to take into account the individual perception of the conditions of the labour market, of what it has to offer, of the presence or otherwise of the possibility of involvement in an informal work and so on. Statements like these are far true if we consider that even the success in scholastic profit, according to some authors, depends both on the social class to which people belong and on the more general conditions of the labour market. The work was performed on the basis of bibliographic searches, internet sites and ISTAT and ISFOL (Italian government agencies) census data.

### 3. Result

The purpose of this article is to briefly describe the condition of the northern suburbs of Naples and its districts compared to the rest of the city. The tables 4 and 5 show how the employment rates of the northern suburbs and neighbourhoods are substantially lower than those of the city, considering the differences in gender and age groups.

The paradox of a family welfare system without the head of a family involved in an informal economy, which supports the young people of their large family, remains. In fact, the difficult conditions of the labour market outlined so far mean that the northern suburbs of Naples present a very high incidence of families whose reference person is unemployed (11.9% against 7.5% Neapolitan) with almost double values as in the case of Pietro (13.9%), Secondigliano (12.4%) and Scampia (12.1%) or even higher as for Miano (17.0% ). We must add to this information the larger average family size that characterize these neighbourhoods.

The familiar character of Italian welfare and the difficulties of entering the labour market of both young people and older people in these neighbourhoods mean, to quote a study by Gambardella and Morlicchio in 2005, a “forced familialism” in which the cohabitation strategies between different families (mostly from different generations) are functional to the very survival of the entire family unit rather than maintaining higher living standards of their younger members.

This “ascending” solidarity can take on different characteristics, above all on the basis of gender belonging. Simplifying as much as possible, we can say that, when compulsory schooling is over, males begin to work and women—sometimes after a series of unsuccessful job searches—contribute to home care tasks. A difficult task is the intervention required and yearned for by the generations of this peculiar context that seek in the scholastic institution the means to be able to hope for a “different future”. The research postulates the need for a reform and an extension of the educational offer, modulated on the basis of the needs and the territorial social structures. This is to achieve, as prescribed by the constitutional dictate, “The full development of the human person”.

**Table 1. Percentage 18-24 Years Old Has not Completed Secondary Education (School Dropout) – European Union**

|         | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|---------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| UE      | 15,5 | 15   | 14,8 | 14,3 | 14   | 13,5 | 12,8 | 12   |
| Germany | 13,7 | 12,5 | 11,8 | 11,1 | 11,9 | 11,7 | 10,6 | 9,9  |
| Spain   | 30,5 | 31   | 31,9 | 31,2 | 28,4 | 26,5 | 24,9 | 23,5 |
| France  | 12,4 | 12,6 | 11,5 | 12,2 | 12,6 | 12   | 11,6 | 9,7  |
| UK      | 11,2 | 16,6 | 17   | 15,7 | 14,9 | 15   | 13,6 | 12,4 |
| Italy   | 20,6 | 19,7 | 19,7 | 19,2 | 18,8 | 18,2 | 17,6 | 17   |
| Male    | 23,9 | 22,9 | 22,6 | 22   | 22   | 21   | 20,5 | 20,2 |
| Female  | 17,1 | 16,4 | 16,7 | 16,3 | 15,4 | 15,2 | 14,5 | 13,7 |

Source: Eurostat, 2014.

**Table 2. Percentage of the Population between 18-24 Years Old with at Most a Middle School Certificate, Which Has not Concluded and Does not Attend a Vocational Training Course Recognized by the Region for at Least 2 Years and Who Does not Attend School Courses or Other Educational Activities**

| Region        | % school dropout | Region              | % school dropout |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Campania      | 21,8             | Lombardia           | 15,3             |
| Sicilia       | 25               | Trentino Alto Adige | 15,9             |
| Sardegna      | 25,8             | Piemonte            | 16,3             |
| Puglia        | 19,8             | Veneto              | 14,1             |
| Calabria      | 17,2             | Liguria             | 17,2             |
| Basilicata    | 13,8             | Marche              | 15,8             |
| Friuli        | 13,3             | Emilia Romagna      | 15,3             |
| Molise        | 9,9              | Abruzzo             | 12,6             |
| Toscana       | 17,5             | Lazio               | 13               |
| Valle d'Aosta | 21,6             | Italia              | 17,6             |

Source: Miur date, 2013.

**Table 3. Social Demographic Indicators, Naples, District**

| District    | Families with pers. of ref. unempl (%) | Families Large families (≥5 members) (%) | Families with 2 or more households (%) | Single-pa rent families (%) | Couples with children (%) | Couples without children (%) | Crowd Index | Rate of fertility | Homes for rent from public bodies (%) |
|-------------|--|--|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Bagnoli     | 5,7                                    | 12,8                                     | 3,0                                    | 11,23                       | 46,6                      | 15,5                         | 0,82        | 4,11              | 4,06                                  |
| Fuorigrotta | 5,0                                    | 10,5                                     | 2,5                                    | 12,78                       | 43,2                      | 16,5                         | 0,75        | 3,78              | 30,15                                 |
| Soccavo     | 7,2                                    | 17,7                                     | 4,3                                    | 12,76                       | 49,3                      | 15,5                         | 0,82        | 4,02              | 59,89                                 |

|                  |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |      |       |
|------------------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Pianura          | 12,7 | 20,9 | 3,4  | 9,00  | 63,6 | 11,6 | 0,96 | 4,05 | 12,32 |
| Chiaia Posillipo | 3,9  | 9,1  | 1,7  | 13,85 | 37,0 | 14,7 | 0,60 | 4,17 | 6,39  |
| San Ferdinando   |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |      |       |
| San Lorenzo      | 8,5  | 13,7 | 2,6  | 12,35 | 40,9 | 13,6 | 0,85 | 4,35 | 5,77  |
| Vicaria          |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |      |       |
| Mercato Pendino  | 10,4 | 14,8 | 2,9  | 12,28 | 42,0 | 13,7 | 0,92 | 6,68 | 10,95 |
| Avvocata         |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |      |       |
| Montecalvario    | 6,3  | 12,0 | 2,4  | 12,49 | 40,5 | 13,8 | 0,77 | 4,43 | 6,44  |
| San Giuseppe     |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |      |       |
| Porto            |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |      |       |
| Stella San Carlo | 7,4  | 12,2 | 2,3  | 12,06 | 44,3 | 15,0 | 0,81 | 4,42 | 12,23 |
| all'Arena        |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |      |       |
| Vomero           | 2,5  | 7,0  | 1,5  | 14,15 | 37,3 | 16,1 | 0,58 | 3,61 | 2,54  |
| Arenella         | 2,8  | 8,1  | 1,5  | 13,17 | 41,0 | 16,9 | 0,62 | 3,64 | 8,75  |
| Piscinola        | 7,8  | 25,2 | 5,8  | 11,72 | 54,0 | 12,8 | 0,92 | 4,09 | 62,28 |
| Miano            | 17,0 | 22,0 | 4,5  | 12,62 | 48,5 | 12,8 | 0,95 | 4,37 | 50,05 |
| Chiaiano         | 8,3  | 14,6 | 2,2  | 10,96 | 53,6 | 13,6 | 0,86 | 3,96 | 13,61 |
| Secondigliano    | 12,4 | 19,3 | 3,9  | 10,90 | 51,5 | 14,4 | 0,95 | 5,00 | 20,36 |
| San Pietro a     |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |      |       |
| Patierno         | 13,9 | 26,3 | 4,2  | 10,28 | 58,0 | 10,8 | 1,02 | 4,84 | 40,17 |
| Poggioreale      |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |      |       |
| Zona Industriale | 7,8  | 16,4 | 3,1  | 11,23 | 46,5 | 14,6 | 0,90 | 3,75 | 60,81 |
| Ponticelli       | 9,2  | 24,1 | 4,7  | 11,11 | 54,7 | 13,7 | 0,93 | 5,57 | 69,35 |
| Barra            | 10,0 | 20,0 | 3,5  | 10,40 | 53,3 | 14,0 | 0,94 | 4,35 | 42,23 |
| San Giovanni a   |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |      |       |
| Teduccio         | 9,9  | 20,7 | 4,9  | 11,92 | 46,9 | 13,8 | 0,97 | 5,14 | 47,29 |
| Scampia          | 12,1 | 33,2 | 10,3 | 13,09 | 53,4 | 11,2 | 0,87 | 4,45 | 85,74 |
| Totale periferia | 11,9 | 23,4 | 5,3  | 11,70 | 52,7 | 12,8 | 0,92 | 4,50 | 47,70 |
| Nord             |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |      |       |
| NAPOLI           | 7,5  | 15,0 | 3,1  | 12,20 | 45,8 | 14,5 | 0,79 | 4,3  | 29,01 |

**Table 4. Employed and Employment Rates by Age Groups, Total Population, Naples, Districts**

| District    | Age Classes |       |       |       |       | Totale<br>15-64 | Rate<br>65<br>more | of<br>and occupation<br>total | of<br>which<br>15-19 |
|-------------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
|             | 15-24       | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 |                 |                    |                               |                      |
| Bagnoli     | 9,4         | 41,2  | 50,9  | 50,1  | 22,3  | 29,0            | 1,7                | 29,5                          | 1,5                  |
| Fuorigrotta | 10,4        | 44,6  | 57,0  | 57,1  | 29,1  | 33,6            | 2,7                | 32,3                          | 2,0                  |
| Soccavo     | 9,5         | 37,4  | 43,4  | 48,8  | 27,0  | 26,9            | 1,9                | 27,5                          | 2,5                  |
| Pianura     | 9,0         | 34,3  | 40,9  | 46,1  | 26,5  | 23,9            | 2,3                | 28,3                          | 2,1                  |

|  |     |      |      |      |      |      |     |      |     |
|--|-----|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|-----|
| Chiaia Posillipo San<br>Ferdinando           | 9,5 | 47,0 | 64,2 | 64,5 | 40,7 | 38,4 | 8,5 | 38,1 | 3,4 |
| San Lorenzo Vicaria                          | 9,0 | 33,4 | 44,3 | 48,1 | 28,8 | 26,1 | 2,8 | 26,7 | 2,5 |
| Mercato Pendino                              | 9,7 | 29,5 | 38,3 | 42,5 | 25,4 | 22,9 | 3,2 | 23,9 | 2,5 |
| Avvocata Montecalvario San<br>Giuseppe Porto | 8,5 | 36,5 | 51,0 | 55,2 | 33,3 | 30,4 | 3,9 | 30,7 | 2,5 |
| Stella San Carlo all'Arena                   | 9,0 | 37,5 | 51,0 | 53,3 | 30,8 | 29,3 | 3,3 | 29,9 | 2,1 |
| Vomero                                       | 7,5 | 50,1 | 71,7 | 72,3 | 40,5 | 42,4 | 5,2 | 39,3 | 0,9 |
| Arenella                                     | 8,0 | 49,8 | 70,1 | 68,8 | 37,7 | 40,8 | 3,9 | 37,8 | 1,1 |
| Piscinola                                    | 6,7 | 25,9 | 37,5 | 44,5 | 25,5 | 20,8 | 2,2 | 23,6 | 1,8 |
| Miano  | 6,7 | 22,8 | 29,1 | 36,2 | 22,9 | 17,7 | 1,5 | 19,2 | 1,8 |
| Chiaiano                                     | 8,7 | 38,7 | 50,1 | 54,5 | 30,7 | 28,9 | 3,7 | 32,3 | 2,0 |
| Secondigliano                                | 7,9 | 27,5 | 37,2 | 42,0 | 23,4 | 21,0 | 1,8 | 23,0 | 2,0 |
| San Pietro a Patierno                        | 8,2 | 25,9 | 34,6 | 40,0 | 22,7 | 18,8 | 1,5 | 22,4 | 2,8 |
| Poggioreale Zona<br>Industriale              | 9,2 | 35,7 | 44,8 | 47,3 | 26,2 | 25,9 | 2,0 | 27,0 | 2,2 |
| Ponticelli                                   | 8,4 | 28,6 | 37,4 | 42,9 | 22,0 | 20,7 | 1,8 | 23,6 | 2,4 |
| Barra  | 9,1 | 30,1 | 37,4 | 41,5 | 21,5 | 21,2 | 1,3 | 23,5 | 2,0 |
| San Giovanni a<br>Teduccio                   | 8,5 | 28,6 | 34,9 | 37,9 | 19,3 | 19,7 | 1,6 | 21,0 | 2,7 |
| Scampia                                      | 6,9 | 21,0 | 29,8 | 42,1 | 23,4 | 17,9 | 1,4 | 20,3 | 2,0 |
| Totale periferia nord                        | 7,4 | 26,4 | 35,9 | 43,1 | 24,6 | 20,6 | 1,9 | 23,0 | 2,0 |
| NAPOLI                                       | 8,7 | 36,4 | 48,5 | 52,2 | 29,9 | 28,1 | 3,5 | 29,3 | 2,2 |

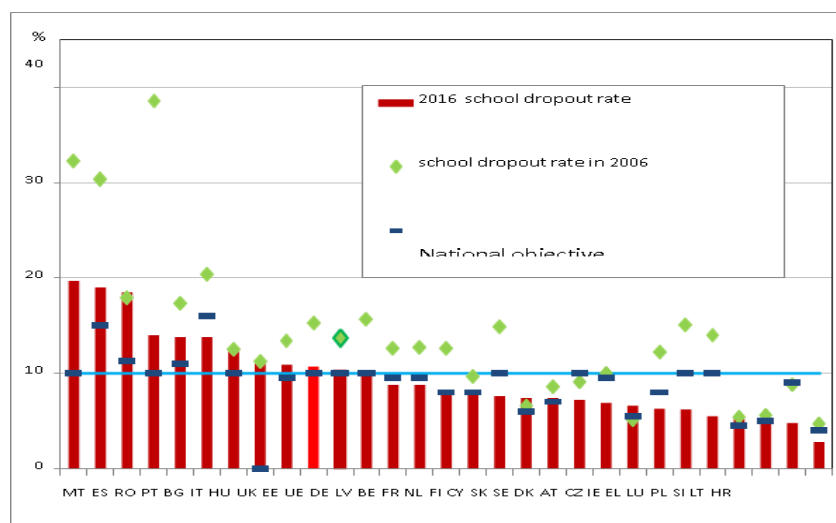
Source: IRSEV elaborations on ISTAT data, 2001 General Population Census.

**Table 5. Population Seeking Employment and Unemployment Rates by Classes of Age, Total Population, Naples, Districts**

| District                           | Age classes |       |       |       |       | Total |          | Unemployment      |                   |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                                    | 15-24       | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 15-64 | 65 e più | et rate.<br>Total | Of which<br>15-19 |
| Agnano                             | 70,7        | 35,9  | 19,6  | 12,0  | 10,0  | 28,0  | 11,8     | 27,8              | 90,0              |
| Fuorigrotta                        | 69,1        | 35,3  | 18,7  | 9,8   | 9,6   | 25,9  | 9,0      | 25,7              | 87,3              |
| Soccavo                            | 75,0        | 42,7  | 29,7  | 15,5  | 11,9  | 35,5  | 13,9     | 35,3              | 88,5              |
| Pianura                            | 77,5        | 44,8  | 30,8  | 17,9  | 17,6  | 39,7  | 26,1     | 39,7              | 91,0              |
| Chiaia Posillipo San<br>Ferdinando | 62,1        | 27,8  | 12,4  | 7,0   | 5,4   | 17,8  | 2,1      | 17,1              | 73,1              |

|                              |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| San Lorenzo Vicaria          | 75,2 | 43,5 | 27,5 | 16,0 | 13,9 | 35,0 | 11,4 | 34,6 | 89,2 |
| Mercato Pendino              | 74,7 | 48,2 | 33,6 | 18,6 | 18,6 | 40,0 | 12,2 | 39,5 | 90,6 |
| Avvocata Montecalvario       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| San Giuseppe Porto           | 72,1 | 36,9 | 20,9 | 11,7 | 10,3 | 27,3 | 9,7  | 26,9 | 86,3 |
| Stella San Carlo all'Arena   | 74,4 | 38,5 | 21,2 | 12,0 | 10,0 | 29,9 | 9,5  | 29,6 | 89,8 |
| Vomero                       | 59,5 | 27,1 | 9,3  | 4,7  | 3,5  | 14,2 | 4,0  | 13,9 | 83,5 |
| Arenella                     | 65,8 | 28,3 | 9,8  | 5,3  | 5,3  | 16,7 | 3,9  | 16,5 | 85,5 |
| Piscinola                    | 78,0 | 47,5 | 27,9 | 13,4 | 14,2 | 37,4 | 10,7 | 37,1 | 90,7 |
| Miano                        | 86,1 | 63,5 | 50,4 | 31,9 | 28,7 | 56,7 | 38,9 | 56,5 | 95,3 |
| Chiaiano                     | 72,9 | 38,6 | 22,6 | 12,8 | 13,0 | 30,4 | 14,5 | 30,2 | 86,4 |
| Secondigliano                | 80,9 | 53,9 | 36,9 | 21,1 | 20,1 | 45,6 | 27,9 | 45,4 | 93,3 |
| San Pietro a Patierno        | 80,5 | 52,2 | 35,6 | 24,5 | 20,5 | 47,2 | 33,3 | 47,2 | 91,0 |
| Poggioreale Zona Industriale | 75,0 | 40,7 | 25,1 | 14,6 | 13,0 | 33,9 | 13,0 | 33,7 | 89,6 |
| Ponticelli                   | 75,0 | 46,6 | 30,9 | 16,9 | 15,5 | 39,2 | 23,8 | 39,1 | 88,5 |
| Barra                        | 75,2 | 45,9 | 30,8 | 18,3 | 16,7 | 39,6 | 20,8 | 39,5 | 91,3 |
| San Giovanni a Teduccio      | 77,5 | 48,4 | 33,4 | 21,7 | 16,8 | 42,8 | 22,1 | 42,6 | 89,5 |
| Scampia                      | 84,0 | 63,2 | 46,1 | 22,3 | 17,1 | 52,4 | 32,3 | 52,3 | 93,7 |
| Totale periferia nord        | 81,5 | 54,3 | 37,3 | 20,8 | 18,8 | 45,7 | 25,8 | 45,6 | 92,8 |
| NAPOLI                       | 74,9 | 40,7 | 23,9 | 13,1 | 11,2 | 31,8 | 9,6  | 31,4 | 89,6 |

Source: IRSEV elaborations on ISTAT data, census General of the Population 2001.



**Figure 1. Early School Leaving, the Main Objective of the Europe 2020 Strategy and National Objectives**

Source: Eurostat.



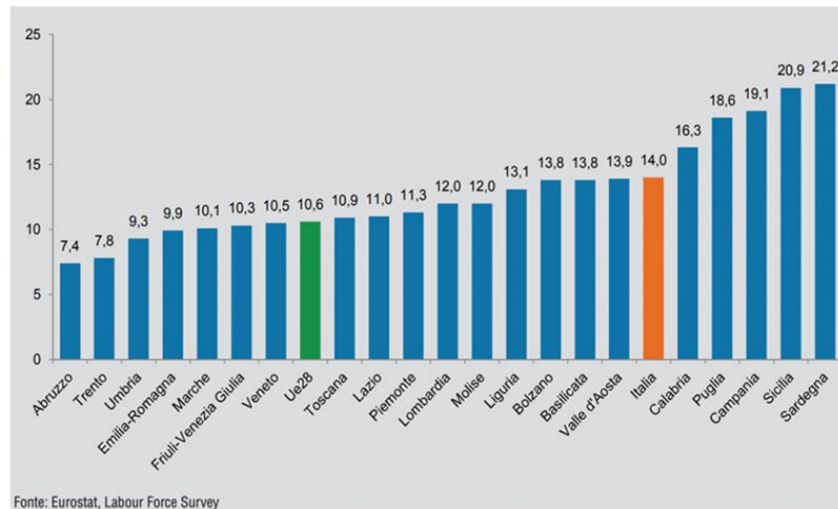


Figure 2. Scholastic Dispersion in Italy and Italian Regions

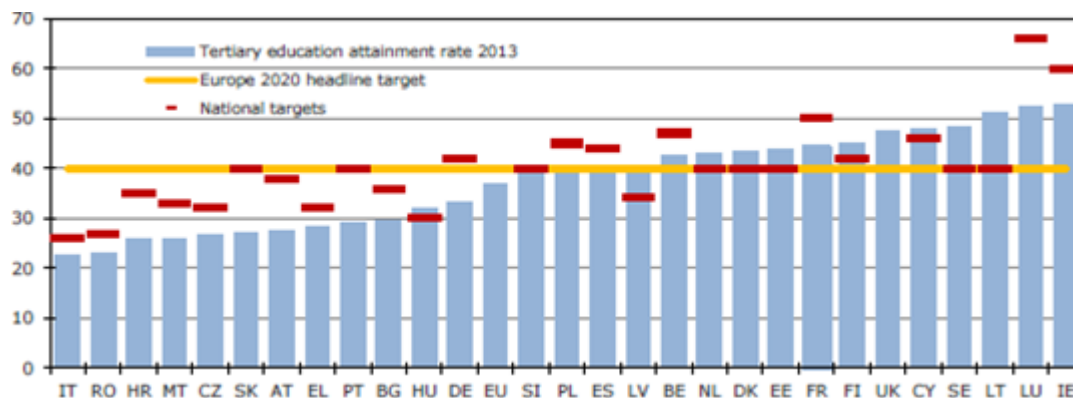


Figure 3. Tertiary Education Attainment (2013), Europe 2020 Headline Target and National Targets

Source: Eurostat, 2013.

#### 4. Discussion

##### 4.1 The Situation in Southern Italy

As a matter of fact, although the analyses on the transformations of the current labour market examined are true on a general level it must be remembered that what individuals experience in some local contexts—those in which the need to invest in human capital seems to be greater—must come to terms not with a labour market “of knowledge”, characterized by a high intensity of capital and knowledge, but with an economic system that has been on the defensive for years, in which not only waste but also invested capital are reduced, a market of the exclusionary “downward” work that every day has to deal with its own capacity for existence and sustainability.

Let us mention, for example, the South of Italy: if the market has little to offer, why is it necessary to invest in human capital? The short circuit occurs because, in situations where the discomfort is more

settled, it is only by possessing a greater human capital that one understands its importance and the possibilities that it has to offer, perhaps away from one's places of origin or even in other countries.

If the strategies with respect to the individual educational destiny can somehow be connected to the perception that the subjects have of their opportunities on the labour market, in fact, it is necessary to dwell on this relationship, above all in the territorial context just cited for which, more and more often, the appeal to school and to greater investments in this institution is invoked to solve the problem of the very high concentration of deviance and social exclusion that characterizes these territories. In such territories, social origins make their weight strongly felt.

In short, it is important to understand the reasons related to the lower level of education and to the lower level of skills—very often below acceptable minimum levels—reached by the students of these territorial contexts. What we are interested in highlighting are the consequences that the difficult conditions of the labour market exert on the school's ability to mitigate, or aggravate, the inequalities and disadvantages of the students in our neighbourhoods. In other words, by its work, does school manage to counteract the reproduction of inequalities generated by the local labour market?

In a family welfare system like the one in our country, the family institution is responsible for protecting its members from the risks of unemployment.

The figure of the male head of the family turns out to be the main pivot on which this welfare system is still based. Moreover, the role of the family has taken on more importance in recent times due to the deregulation of the labour market which has increased the risk of job precariousness of young people. If this is the system that characterizes the Italian welfare system as a whole, these considerations appear even more significant for Southern Italy, in which young people seem more exposed to problems of job placement and the older subjects are involved in the labour market extensively than their peers from the north.

What often happens in the northern suburbs of Naples is that, in addition to the historical difficulties that young people encounter in entering the labour market, even the male head of the family has difficulty in finding work and having, as an alternative, the only possibility of obtaining an income in the informal economy.

This calls into question the possibility that the family can adequately act as a safety net and that the educational system itself has little impact on the context. The family itself tends to consider the costs of a long investment in human capital of the younger members to be unsustainable, seeing them forced to stop burdening family expenses as soon as possible or, in any case, to contribute to such expenses. In the case of males, there is an early insertion into the labour market, following the early school leaving, most of the time choosing informal economy, since this unskilled workforce have few possibilities to resort to the not many formal occupations that the territory can offer.

The result of these dynamics is in contrast with the widespread practice of prolonging cohabitation with one's parents, a strong concentration of young single-income families from the very low cultural capital

that are formed early but that seem destined to retrace the same path of their family of origin and sometimes to undertake deviant roads and paths.

#### *4.2 Education and Combating School Dropout. European Goals*

School education, having its main task of “teaching to learn”, lays the foundation for the lifelong learning we refer to in analyzing employability and professional retraining.

Moreover, school education assumes a more important role when the labour market itself presents serious imbalances. With the increase in the unemployment rate, in fact, competition for available jobs is increasing and it is obvious that in such conditions it is the weakest subjects (with the least cultural and social capital) who pay the most for them. The fact remains that, if it is true that at the base of the employment status achieved at the entrance of the labour market the main determinant still remains the social origin, it is also true that this entry is always mediated by the qualification obtained which in turn is closely related to social origins.

Beyond the importance that school education has with respect to job placement, we must not forget the challenges that today’s globalized society poses to its members.

A society that defines itself as of “knowledge” that is becoming a society of “access” (Note 3), in which the new economy and the incessant process of individualization require an ever greater level of empowerment and active participation of the subjects both in the markets and in the democratic life, makes the task of the school crucial.

Several world organizations (OECD, UNESCO, World Bank) give great importance to education systems in the development of a society of knowledge in which human capital is an added value to economic and social development. This orientation was, among other things, shared by the European Union itself, which among the priority objectives that member states must commit to achieving involves a massive increase in the education level of the population. *“The European 2020 strategy aims to boost the EU economy over the next decade. In a changing world the EU aims to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. These three mutually reinforcing priorities aim to help the EU and the Member States achieve high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. In practice, the Union has set five ambitious goals—on employment, innovation, education, social integration and climate/energy - to be achieved by 2020. Each Member State has adopted its national objectives for each of these sectors. Concrete interventions at European and national levels are going to consolidate the strategy”* (Comment from the expiring Commission President (2014), JM Barroso to the objectives that the Union set by 2020).

The strategy was set on the basis of three priorities for Europe in 2020:

- a) smart growth (developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation);
- b) sustainable growth (promoting a more efficient economy in terms of resources, greener and more competitive);
- c) inclusive growth (promoting an economy with a high employment rate that favours social and territorial cohesion).

Focusing on the problem of dispersion and on the evolution of the definitions attributed to it over the years allows us to define some important dimensions linked to the problem of the effectiveness/efficiency of school systems and that relative category of law which is equity .

As stated by the European Commission (Com, 2006, p. 481) “(...) *a fair system ensures that the effects of education and training are independent from socio-economic factors*”. The same concept of equity defines, in a sense, not only a state of affairs, but a “multiplier”, that is the consequences that educational inequalities can have on the distribution of social rewards, reinforcing privileges or, on the contrary, preventing the better potential to progress just because they are marked by a condition of disadvantaged socio-economic status.

#### *4.3 School Dropout*

Defining the concept of dispersion in a precise and unambiguous way, to link it to that of equity, turns out to be a particularly arduous task.

The concept of early school leaving appeared in the 1980s with the definitive affirmation of mass education.

Previously, the terms used to describe the phenomena of abandonment were those of mortality and selection that referred to a set of “hidden” selective practices that the school used to expel students because of their belonging to a specific social class. With the advent of mass education, that is a school founded on the principles of equality, the concept of selectivity lost much of its meaning. If the latter, therefore, attributed to the school the responsibility for leaving the students’ training path, the concept of dispersion attributed these responsibilities mainly to pupils and their families.

In this way the first two dimensions of which is necessary to take into account regarding the relationship between pupils and scholastic institutions are outlined, in other words, those that we could define as exogenous and endogenous causes to the school of school dropouts.

A set of phenomena such as leaving the school before the end of the cycle of studies attended or leaving the school without having obtained the corresponding educational qualification, school evasion, absenteeism due to prolonged or persistent illness to skip school, attendance but poor performance and other types of scholastic abandonment reflect a situation of dispersion seen in its totality with a reformulated responsibility between school and pupils.

A greater strategic freedom is granted to pupils with respect to the choices made regarding their schooling, emphasizing that the decision to abandon their studies may not only be an act directed against the school, and what it represents, but more generally a choice to free oneself from the tensions and difficulties that accompany the schooling, such as feeling bad at school, in short.

The problem is the “escape” from school, from situations that do not put at ease, therefore “democracy deficit” (Lupoli, 1999; in Perone, 2007).

There are some aspect that counteract this set of dimensions, and they are more properly internal to the school that allow, or not, the equitable distribution of the teaching resource, structural aspects (state of the buildings, number of classrooms available, technical equipment for didactics), economic aspects

(amount of funds available), processing aspects (teaching practices, classroom interactions, competence and motivation of teachers, mobility and precariousness of teachers) and systemic aspects (organization of teaching and educational strategies).

A privileged meeting point between these exogenous and endogenous causes that allows us to provide a key to understand the functioning of the educational institution, are the conditions of the labour market that contributes predominantly to define the school external conditions, both with respect to the objective variables (socio-economic level of the resident population in the territory) and subjective variables (individual strategies in the school-work transition and propensity to invest in the educational path).

Early school leaving is a phenomenon that affects all the countries of the European Union, but the Italian situation, compared with the European situation, shows the flaws and inefficiency of its school system (Figure 1) and among the Italian regions the most alarming data are found in the South (Figure 2).

The national figure relating to the second target on human capital set by the EU, i.e. the increase in the level of diffusion of tertiary education, is not only much lower than the EU average, but does not even show a dynamic that suggests a possibility of recovery in a short time.

In 2013 we firmly occupy the last place in Europe; almost half of the European Union countries have already achieved the set target: eight Member States have a rate that exceeds the European target (Denmark, Luxembourg and Finland). Italy, on the other hand, is not only among the 10 nations with a target of less than 40%, but has the lowest target in the whole EU: 26-27%, starting from 21.7 in 2012. A figure that is certainly not very encouraging, given that other countries, such as Malta, Croatia, Slovakia started from a value slightly higher than the Italian one.

#### *4.4 The Territorial unit of Reference. Northern Suburbs of Naples*

The Istat data highlight and confirm the major difficulties of employment of the inhabitants of the South, and the most affected are young people, women and individuals with low schooling.

In Campania, comparing to the unemployment rate, Naples ranks among the top ten Italian provinces with higher values (12.4%). The Neapolitan province is in third place in the ranking of highest inactivity rates (53%), preceded by Caserta and Crotone (Labour force survey, inactive population, provincial level, Istat data (Italian government agency), Retrieved from <http://www.dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?lang=en&SubSessionId=44e15c41-8624-4d40-85ff-063915ec6379>).

In the case of Naples, it is just the northern outskirts of the city, formed by the Piscinola neighborhoods, Chiaiano, Secondigliano, San Pietro a Patierno and Scampia, to present conditions that seem to be particularly problematic with regard to a set of socio-economic parameters of the basic and extreme poverty of local productive activities. This socio-territorial articulation has a purely analytical value. Many neighbourhoods, residential areas or Scampia, see the coexistence of families with high status with families that could be defined as destitute, they give us a picture in which desperation and luxury are intertwined, for example, in Scampia, the upper middle classes live in segregated parks, well protected by heavy electronic gates and guardians. For the description of the social condition we will use the data of the 2001 census.

Our territorial unit of reference was younger than the city average age for each district of which it is composed. There are several reasons for the lower average age of these areas, first of all we must consider that the district fertility rate, with the exception of Piscinola and Chiaiano, is higher than the average rate of the city (Table 1).

The northern suburbs appear to be younger also due to the peculiarities that have characterized its urban development, that occurred much later than in the other areas of the city.

It was a scarcely inhabited area before 1950s, because of massive public building interventions, as evidenced by the high incidence of rented housing by public bodies (Table 2) affected since the 60s by a very strong and widespread speculation.

Due to the public or private (mostly abusive) intervention with respect to the housing stock of the northern suburbs, this has experienced a strong increase in the resident population caused by a widespread availability of low-cost housing.

However, the 2001 census showed that this tendency towards an almost exponential increase in the resident population has started to undergo a reversal of the trend and compared to the previous decade the demographic structure shows its aging.

It is evident that the districts of the northern suburbs of Naples have hosted, over time, thanks to the general characteristics of their housing stock, the population strata belonging to lower and disadvantaged classes. Furthermore, youth social inclusion is fundamental in our territorial unit of reference since even from the analysis of this aspect the component of young and very young people is scarcely protected if the scholastic policies addressed to them are excluded, and scarcely effective, too.

From an analysis carried out on the 1991 census data, Morlicchio and Pratschke conducted a study of the territorial articulation of poverty in Naples in 2004 and they highlighted how much the northern periphery presents a risk of poverty enough high, with the exception of Chiaiano.

We will try to repeat a similar analysis on the 2001 census data, referring to a set of indicators that literature and poverty surveys indicate as risk factors.

Let's start with an analysis of the characteristics of the families in the area, referring to Table 3.

The increased presence of young people is reflected in the types of households in the northern suburbs that show a higher incidence of households with dependent children (52.7% against a town average of 45.8%) and a smaller presence of couples with no children or nuclei composed of a single component. Therefore, the northern suburbs have a greater presence of families that we could define as traditional.

What is most striking, however, is the size of these "traditional" families, on average far greater than the rest of the city. Here, in fact, there is an incidence of large families (with more than five components) much higher than that of the entire city (respectively 23.4% and 15%). Even Scampia has a more than doubled quota (33.2%) compared to that of Naples as a whole. Even for complex families, that is those composed of several households in cohabitation, the northern suburbs (5.3%) recorded an almost double incidence than the town (3.1%) with an internal situation not very dissimilar to the previous one. These results well describe the risk of poverty faced by the families of these neighbourhoods considering that a

national survey taken a few years ago showed that a large family out of three and a complex family out of two are poor (ISTAT, 2006).

The difficult conditions of the labour market that affect not only young people and women, but also male heads of families, figures on which the family welfare system is based, make these risks more real and tangible.

From Table 3 we can note that the total activity rate of the northern suburbs (42.3%) does not differ much from the city average (42.7%) but it presents an internal situation that is not homogeneous if we consider each neighbourhood of which it is composed.

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## Notes

Note 1. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Note 2. The concept of well-being was introduced in the Economic and Social Theory debate in 1890 by Alfred Marshall, who was among the first to support the social nature of happiness. Today, on the other hand, this term is by everyone connected to Sen, as a key concept in the capability approach.

Note 3. L'era dell'accesso. La rivoluzione della new economy, Jeremy Rifkin, Mondadori 2001.