

Some Regional Gaps in Social Exclusion in Italy. Evidences from EU-SILC

*Alcuni Divari Territoriali dell'Esclusione Sociale in Italia
Evidenze da EU-SILC*

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Riassunto: In questo lavoro si presentano alcuni primi risultati di un'analisi sui differenziali regionali dell'esclusione sociale in Italia, utilizzando le informazioni provenienti dalla prima onda italiana del nuovo *panel* europeo EU-SILC.

A fronte di una chiara connotazione geografica della povertà di reddito lungo la penisola, le nostre analisi mostrano che la ripartizione geografica tradizionale, in macro aree, non risulta valida per il rischio sociale ed ambientale percepito che invece presenta una distribuzione a macchia di leopardo con alcune significative contiguità territoriali.

Keywords: risk of social exclusion, regional gaps, perception indicators

1. The need of regional indicators for the social exclusion

This paper is fully inserted in the mainstream of national and international research, which is, in the last years, intensively oriented to the definition of sub-national poverty lines, and of regional social indicators to orient better local policies. Regional analyses in Italy are particularly important because there are many economic and social differences between the Northern and Southern regions, and the nation is characterized by a very slow internal economic convergence process. Although income poverty shows a higher concentration in the Italian South regions, there is no such homogeneity in the distribution of several aspects (components) of a wider concept of social exclusion, in terms of perceived risks.

2. The first Italian wave of EU-SILC

EU-SILC (European Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) is a longitudinal sample survey on families started in 2003 in 25 EU countries. One of its main institutional cores is to collect harmonized data on income and social exclusion issues. The survey is specially oriented to a multidimensional approach to poverty and social exclusion, although, in our opinion, too many variables only reflect material deprivation. The European directives impose only a national representativeness, but the Italian sample of EU-SILC assures the estimates' consistency at regional level. Few months ago ISTAT made available the first wave of the Italian sample in EU-SILC

(ISTAT, 2006), collected in 2004 (referring to the interviewees in 2004 and reporting income information about 2003). The sample include about 24,200 families.

We chose to put our attention on variables related to the perception of some problems that can be linked to a perceived social exclusion. In particular we matter whether the households feel pollution, grime, violence, crime, vandalism and noise in the area they live in as a problem. Moreover we consider also the discomfort of living in a dark dwelling. These aspects could be an evidence of poor living conditions, at least from a subjective point of view, and have a heavy impact on social exclusion.

3. First findings on regional gaps in some aspects of social exclusion

Using regional and macro-area poverty lines a lot of heterogeneity emerges in the typologies of poor families along Italy. This can be due to the different demographical composition of the twenty Italian regions, but also to other key characteristics. Moreover first results show that most of the economic exclusion measures have the same clearly shaped gradient from the North to the South of the country. But looking at some particular components of social exclusion and living conditions, comparing to what we could expect, there are some differences that smooth the traditional geographical gradient. Spatial correlations (by Moran, 1950 and Anselin, 1988) show often a spotted pattern, highlighting that there is no homogeneity in traditional administrative macro-area aggregations.

Looking at the maps, we see that the perception of problems related to pollution, noise and crime, it is not geographically concentrated in specific areas of the Country. The Moran index attains a significant low and negative value for pollution and environmental problems, showing dissimilarities between each region and its nearest neighbourhood ($MI=-0.37$). Instead a geographical pattern is observed about the perception of the darkness in the house, with a quite high positive spatial correlation with the neighbourhood ($MI=0.67$). Surprisingly this problem is more perceived by southern regions.

The perception of noise and crime/vandalism show a not significant spatial correlation with the nearest regions, although the noise problems are more geographically concentrated (characterized) than those about the crime.

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