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# How the concept of well-being changes and how to measure it: the case of Italy

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Istat

**It is only by having better metrics that truly reflect people's lives and aspirations that we will be able to design and implement “*better policies for better lives*” (OECD).**

- When we set up a framework for measuring well-being based on a dashboard of indicators reflecting what we value as a society, we need to make sure that “what we value” is a **shared concept**.
- Maintenance of the system:
  - ✓ Monitor issues that have become an increasing source of concern in society (changes in the economy and society affect also the adequacy of our metrics).
  - ✓ Check availability of new data and new sources.
- Advancements in the analysis of the wide amount of information contained in the dashboard.

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2. Maintenance of the system: the well-being domains and indicators
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# The Italian experience: BES a complex approach on measuring well-being

b e s



Steering  
Committee

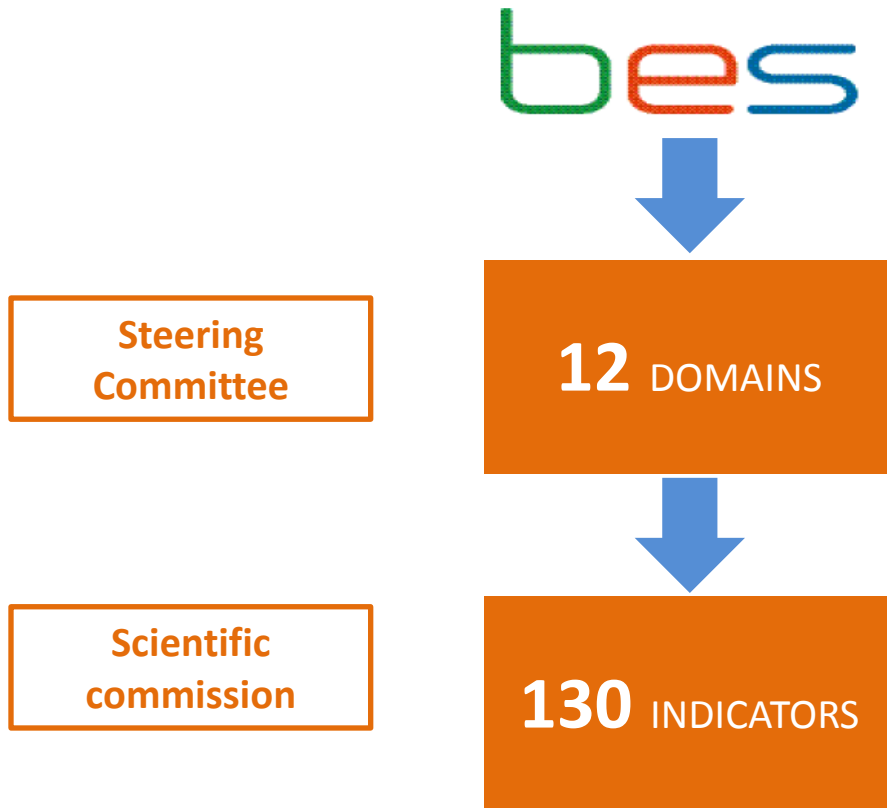
12 DOMAINS

Set up in 2010 to define the most relevant domains of well-being.

National survey to check consensus on the 12 domains.

**Aim: to produce a set of indicators to provide a shared view of the progress of Italian society.**

# The Italian experience: BES a complex approach on measuring well-being



To select a set of high-quality statistical indicators that are representative of the different domains.

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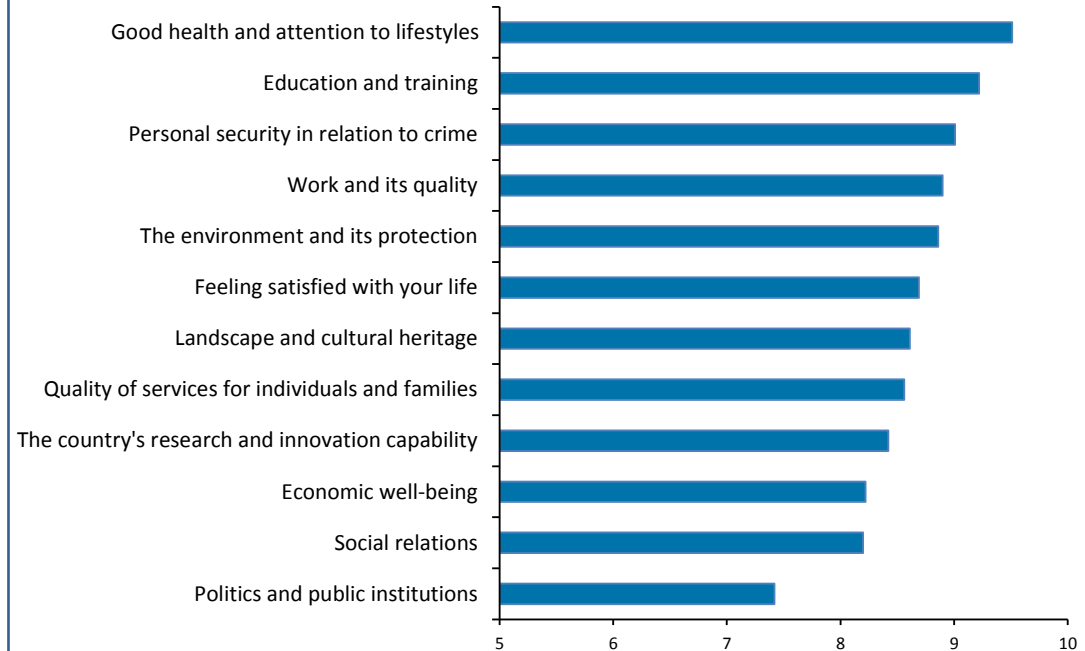
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# Maintenance of the system: the well-being domains

- The 12 domains of Bes are considered all significant (average marks between 7.4 and 9.5)
- Young people aged between 18 and 29 attach greater importance to social relations, research and innovation and well-being intended as life satisfaction.
- People with a lower level of education give a higher value to personal safety.

## AVERAGE SCORE FOR THE WELL-BEING DOMAINS (MARKS BETWEEN 0 AND 10).

Italy – Year 2018. Persons aged 18 and over



# Maintenance of the system: the indicators

Every year Istat reviews the set of indicators.

- a) **Emerging issues:** some issues received increasing attention in the last few years; some issues are old but have become an increasing source of concern.
- b) **new available indicators and new data sources:** development of new statistical information and methodologies;
- c) **revision of calculation:** in some cases revision of calculation method for indicators.





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In 2018, advancements in the analysis:

Introduction of a section dedicated to **in-depth thematic studies**, with the aim of presenting analysis of well-being across the domains. With two insights:

- a) **vertical inequalities**, following the approach suggested by OECD, we carried out a joint analysis of inequality profiles (OECD, How's life?, 2017).
- b) **determinants of subjective well-being**

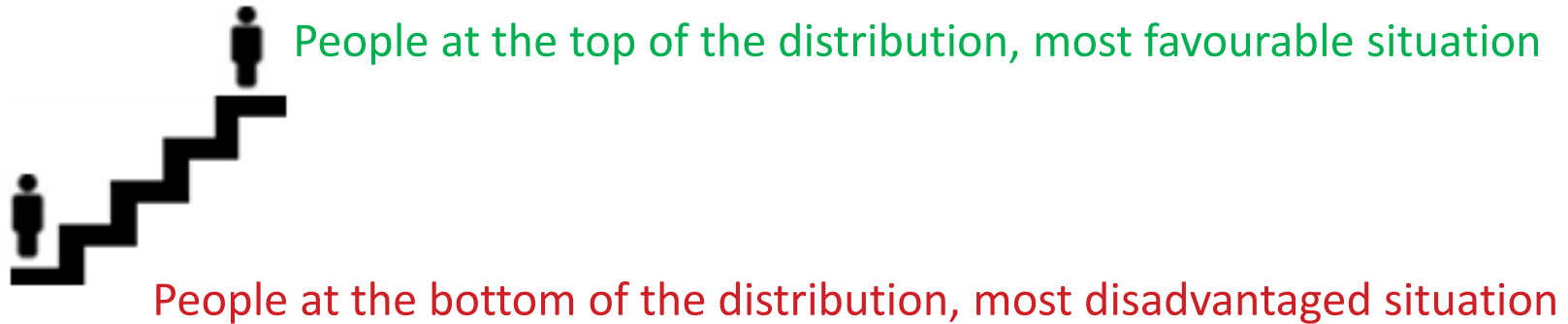


# Vertical inequalities

The most unequal countries are less prosperous and if we want to do better, we must become more equal. (Richard Wilkinson).

→ How is well-being distributed among the different groups that make up society?

Vertical inequalities analysis shows the distance between:



# Vertical inequalities in 3 Bes domains

- **Economic well-being:** inequality of disposable income
- **Subjective well-being:** life satisfaction
- **Education and training:** years of education

The comparison between 20% of the people in the best situation and 20% of those in the worst situation shows, for **Italy**, that:

- **disposable income is almost 6 times higher:** in 2016 the richest hold almost 40% of resources; the poorest hold 6.7% of resources.
- **Life satisfaction is 2 times higher:** in 2017 the average mark is 8.9 among the most satisfied, compared to 4.4 among the least satisfied.
- **The average number of years in education is 2.5 times higher:** in 2017 average number of years of education is 17 years among the most educated, 7 years among the least educated.

# Vertical inequalities: joint analysis

Vertical inequality index of disposable income, life satisfaction and years of education by region. Years 2016 e 2017

Level of vertical inequality

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

Bolzano



Campania,  
Puglia, Sicilia

Vertical inequality index					
Disposable income (2016)		Life satisfaction (2017)		Years of education (2017)	
<b>Bolzano</b>	<b>3,74</b>	<b>Bolzano</b>	<b>1,62</b>	<b>Bolzano</b>	<b>2,34</b>
Trento	4,79	Trento	1,79	Trento	2,33
Abruzzo	5,02	Abruzzo	1,86	Abruzzo	2,38
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	4,05	Friuli-Venezia Giulia	1,96	Friuli-Venezia Giulia	2,38
Veneto	4,18	Veneto	1,98	Veneto	2,37
Piemonte	4,68	Piemonte	2,02	Piemonte	2,39
Emilia-Romagna	4,63	Emilia-Romagna	1,96	Emilia-Romagna	2,40
Valle d'Aosta	4,73	Valle d'Aosta	1,97	Valle d'Aosta	2,36
Liguria	5,24	Liguria	1,97	Liguria	2,44
Basilicata	5,20	Basilicata	1,96	Basilicata	2,51
Toscana	4,71	Toscana	1,95	Toscana	2,47
Lombardia	5,39	Lombardia	1,94	Lombardia	2,45
Lazio	6,39	Lazio	1,87	Lazio	2,45
Umbria	4,12	Umbria	2,08	Umbria	2,46
Marche	4,69	Marche	2,04	Marche	2,44
Molise	4,56	Molise	2,20	Molise	2,58
Sardegna	6,50	Sardegna	2,14	Sardegna	2,46
Calabria	6,87	Calabria	1,99	Calabria	2,76
<b>Puglia</b>	<b>5,38</b>	<b>Puglia</b>	<b>2,04</b>	<b>Puglia</b>	<b>2,73</b>
<b>Campania</b>	<b>7,30</b>	<b>Campania</b>	<b>2,03</b>	<b>Campania</b>	<b>2,74</b>
<b>Sicilia</b>	<b>7,21</b>	<b>Sicilia</b>	<b>2,29</b>	<b>Sicilia</b>	<b>2,66</b>
<b>ITALIA</b>	<b>5,92</b>	<b>ITALIA</b>	<b>2,03</b>	<b>ITALIA</b>	<b>2,51</b>

# Determinants of subjective well-being

To identify individual and contextual factors associated with subjective well-being in Italy.

Two steps:

1. Study the associations in three moments in time: before, during and after the Italian economic crisis, using a logistic model on individual data from the Istat annual survey Aspects of daily life, and comparing the years with the average marginal effects.
2. Analyze territorial differences using a multilevel approach, using data from multiple sources.

# Determinants of subjective well-being - population aged 25-64

## Variables

Individual  
level

Gender  
Age group  
Citizenship  
Number of family members  
Educational level  
Professional condition  
Health condition  
Trust in others

Household  
level

Ownership of the house  
Average family education level  
Difficulty in accessing some services

Territorial  
level  
(municipality –  
LAU)

Size of municipality  
Unemployment rate (Nuts 3)  
Business productivity  
Added value of enterprises for inhabitant  
Violent crimes reported (Nuts 3)  
Soil sealing  
Separate collection of urban waste

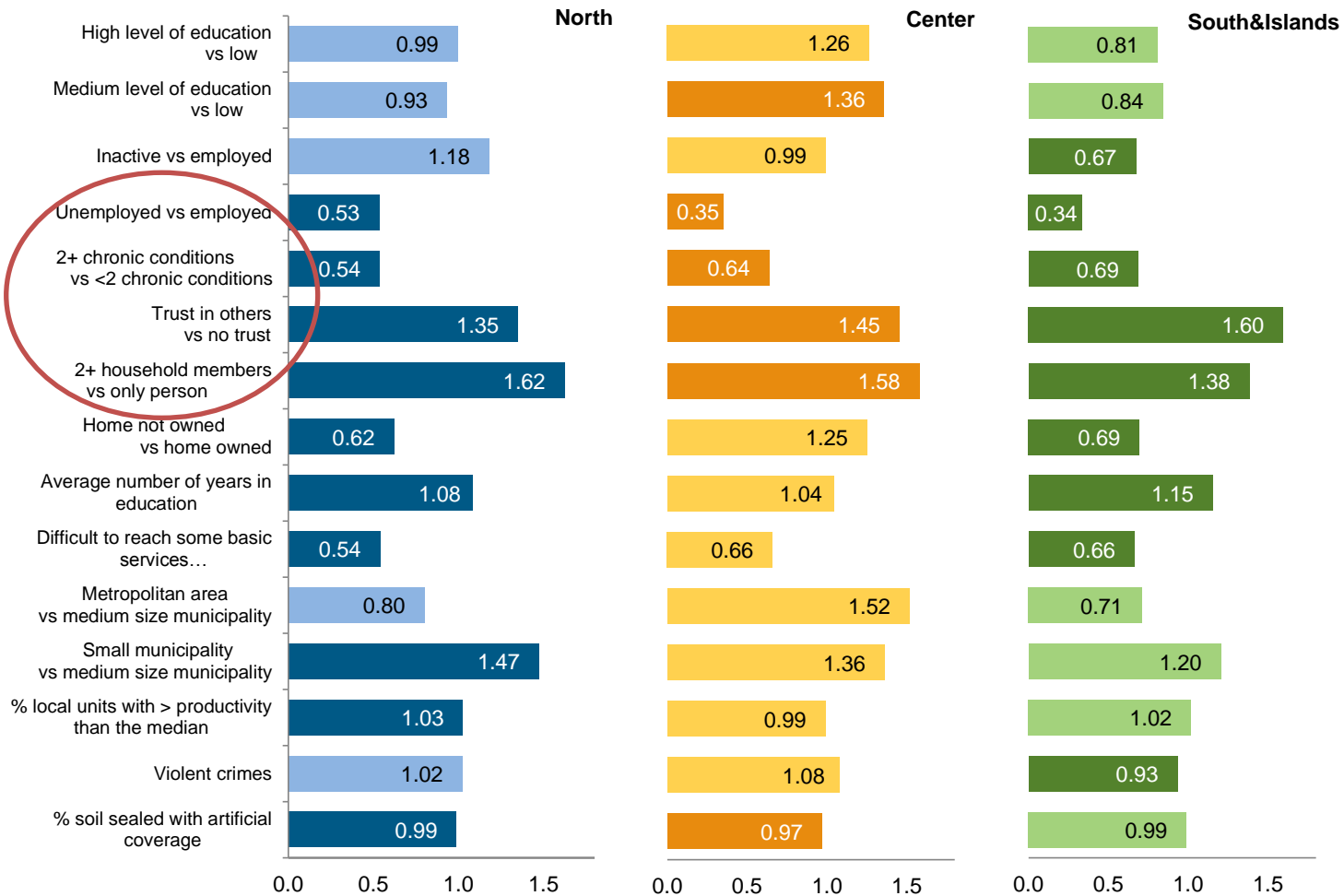
Subjective  
well-being

«Currently, how satisfied  
are you with your life as a  
whole?»

Score between 8 and 10 (on a  
scale where 0 indicates "not at  
all satisfied" and 10 "very  
satisfied")

# Determinants of subjective well-being: results

**Hierarchical mixed-effect logistics model on «Life satisfaction» by geographic breakdown. Year 2017 (odds ratios)**





## Next Bes report in december 2019:

- Expanding the analysis of equity: tables by level of education
- Deepen the analysis of subjective well-being in relation to other domains: using Eusilc data 2018 (ad hoc module on well-being)
- Revision of indicators: meetings with the thematic groups for each domain
- Keep track of theoretical advances and recommendations (es. OECD 2018; MAKSWELL Project)



Thank you!  
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