



Quality of life in Italian official surveys

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Quality-of-life movement



historical background

***1. From social indicators to
quality of life***

2. Quality-of-life movement in Italy

Quality-of-life data in official statistics in Italy

the Copernican revolution

***1. From economic-oriented to
social-oriented official statistics***

***2. From social perspective to
quality-of-life perspective***

Future perspectives of QOL data: new indicators of wellbeing

Quality-of-life movement



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1. *From social indicators to quality of life*



Quality-of-life studies



50-year history



inheriting “social indicators” movement,
born in USA during 60s (Bauer, 1966)

1. From social indicators to quality of life



*quantifying "symptoms" (indicators)
of living conditions*



A. Niceforo
(1916-17, 1921)



recognized (Noll, 2004) as the pioneer
of social-indicators concept

1. From social indicators to quality of life



NASA's project aimed at studying the impact of the American space program on American society



R. Bauer

(1966)



basic definition of social indicators:
"statistics, statistical series, and all other forms of evidence that enable us to assess where we stand and are going with respect to our values and goals"

1. *From social indicators to quality of life*



diffusion of innovative ideas and concepts related to the so-called social indicators movement and research:

- United States,
- Europe and other countries
- international organisations (OECD, UN, ...)

1. From social indicators to quality of life



Debate on social indicators
shifted to:

what should be considered the major
goal of social progress

1. *From social indicators to quality of life*



Emerging issue → social costs of economic growth



discussion about value orientations and goals of development and growth

**1. From social indicators to
quality of life**



concept of
QUALITY OF LIFE

alternative to
(more and more questionable)
concept of **MATERIAL PROSPERITY**

multidimensional and complex goal of
societal development

1. *From social indicators to quality of life*



introduced idea



new goals for measuring social progress

based upon

values orientations and concept of policy and political participation

1. From social indicators to quality of life



research question



how to operationalise the concept and
how to quantify it in terms of data and
indicators

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2. *Quality-of-life movement in Italy*



debates and interests on
QUALITY OF LIFE RESEARCH

at international level
inside and outside the Academia

in Italy
hard to take shape, especially in the
academic field

2. *Quality-of-life movement in Italy*



However

several local administrations promoted numberless studies and researches on **liveableness** of cities and regions

2. Quality-of-life movement in Italy



pioneer
territorial/local administrations'
experiences (70s)
(e.g., the Bilanci Sociali d'Area)

wide interest in quality-of-life studies
at the local level
(Martinotti, 1981; Nuvolati, 2002)

2. *Quality-of-life movement in Italy*



New recent experiences

- Annual report by "Sole 24ore" on Quality-of-life in Italian provinces
- Sbilanciamoci! → QUARS
Indice di Qualità dello Sviluppo Regionale

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1. From economic-oriented to social-oriented official statistics



Traditionally

Official statistics → economic-oriented



individuals considered “productive subjects” more than citizens,
(assuming a male-style model)

no information on households

1. From economic-oriented to social-oriented official statistics



Traditionally

Official statistics → economic-oriented



individuals → "productive subjects"
children → "students"
elderly people → "retired workers"

1. From economic-oriented to social-oriented official statistics



Traditionally
Official statistics → **economic-oriented**



no element
allowing a comprehensive analysis of
a society as a whole

...

reducing the completeness
of statistics production

**1. From economic-oriented to
social-oriented official statistics**



The **QUALITY OF LIFE APPROACH**

puts

social subjects

at the centre

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90s

the turning point

for Italian official statistics

2. From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective



Official statistics

Sistema delle indagini Multiscopo

(from 1993)

putting ISTAT in the vanguard
and in line with the perspective emerged in a
recent meeting on

*Measuring subjective well-being: an opportunity for
National Statistical Offices?*

(Florence, 2009)

2. From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective



Aims

- improving official statistics on social condition of the country for policy makers
- developing knowledge for administrative purposes
- observing
 - (i) relationships between facts
 - (ii) complexity of behaviours and attitudes
 - (iii) define QoL with the possibility to trace interventions

2. From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective



INTRODUCTION OF SUBJECTIVE DATA



not always considered proxy
information about some objective
dimensions of the studied phenomena

2. From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective



INTRODUCTION OF SUBJECTIVE DATA



important challenge for official statistics



increasing the interpretative capacity of data about social phenomena

2. *From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective*



COPERNICAN REVOLUTION



overcoming the invisibility of subjects and households in official statistics.

2. From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective



COPERNICAN REVOLUTION



allows genders, childhood and elderly quality-of-life statistics to be developed and to focus on particular social groups (disabled, immigrants, ...)

2. From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective



SUBJECTS



no more parts of institutions or sectors (household, school, work, ...)

2. From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective



SUBJECTS

no more

parts of institutions or sectors
(household, school, work, ...)

SEEN

No more in terms of

Student

Children

Housewives

Pensioners

but

Young

Childhood

Women

Elderly

...

2. From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective



DEVELOPMENT OF NEW INDICATORS

devoted to particular social subjects:

- Children ←
- Elderly people ←
- Young people ←
- Disabled ←
- Women (gender approach) ←

2. From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective



SOME EXAMPLES

health

more importance

not only to

- physical and mental well-being
- use of services

but also to

- prevalence of chronic diseases
- measuring of disabilities
- prevention behaviours and lifestyles

2. From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective



SOME EXAMPLES

Criminality

not only

- reported crimes,

but also

- hidden criminality (→ domestic violence)

2. From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective



SOME EXAMPLES

Time-use, leisure time, culture

not only

- reported behaviours,

but also

- motivational and perception data

allowing to explore new phenomena
(e.g., digital divided)

**2. From social perspective to
quality-of-life perspective**



SOME EXAMPLES

Social networks

improved knowledge on

family and its transformation along
years



structural changes

**2. From social perspective to
quality-of-life perspective**



SOME EXAMPLES

Poverty and deprivation

from

relative poverty measures

to attempts to define

absolute measures

**2. From social perspective to
quality-of-life perspective**



SOME EXAMPLES

Poverty and deprivation

from only

objective measures (monetary)

to also

subjective measures

**2. From social perspective to
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SOME EXAMPLES

Immigrants

aim

measure social integration

in order to

improve existing statistical information

2. From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective



SOME EXAMPLES

Poor and homeless

Challenge in different perspectives

- conceptual (new definitions needed)
- methodological (new survey methods)
- analytical (multidimensionality)

2. From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective



SOME EXAMPLES

Discrimination

Ad-hoc survey on

prejudice and discrimination attitudes

- gender oriented ←
- ethnic oriented ←
- sexual oriented ←

2. From social perspective to quality-of-life perspective



SOME EXAMPLES

Discrimination

*Aiming at studying
discrimination as phenomenon
showing*

- Possible cumulative effects on different dimensions
- Possible combination of more sources on the same individual

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Future perspectives



GOAL

Improving statistical data production

in the perspective of
new measure of wellbeing
and progress of society

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Sistema delle indagini multiscopo

- increasing cadence
- introducing new topics
 - e.g. awareness towards environmental issues
- defining new ah-hoc surveys
 - e.g. discrimination

Future perspectives



IMPROVEMENTS OF QUALITY-OF-LIFE APPROACH



fits in with the recent international movement exploring new ways to measure societal wellbeing aimed at passing the mere GDP perspective



Many thanks for your attention

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