

# Quality of Life Indicators as a Tool for Assessing the Course of Development of Countries in Relevance to the Framework of Sustainable Development

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## Abstracts

Quality of life is one of the long-standing studies. It has inherited its traditions through a set of social indicators that are concerned with the collection and analysis of data, for the study of social welfare and quality of life's issues. However, there are still gap in the literature that did not address 'How effective are these indicators in the measurement of state policies efficiency according to the new perspective of development?'

This topic raised the interest of researchers, especially in the 1990s, by holding several conferences around the world such as Canada, the United States, Spain, Germany, South Africa, Italy and Thailand. Italy's quality of life experience will be reviewed, and aimed at developing new indicators for measuring and monitoring social and environmental conditions, such as well-being indicators on landscape and well-being indicators of cultural heritage, to assess the development path sustainability for this country. A descriptive and analytical approach was adopted for this purpose. The study results highlighted at the end different perspectives of new social phenomena, through the relationship between individual and society from a new perspective of development and self-esteem.

**Keywords:** Quality of Life, Social indicators, Social Welfare, Well-being Indicators on the Landscape, development path sustainability.

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## 1 Introduction

The quality of life has become an essential issue in the national policy of each country. A range of studies has been conducted on the quality of life in a range of disciplines, such as sociology, geography, economics, planning, psychology and public health. For several organisations published some comparisons of countries and cities on the quality of life.

The idea of sustainability is largely based on the depletion of the Earth's vital resources, and some are seen as reducing pollution in its forms, preserving nature, biodiversity and others, but others have expanded to encompass the idea of sustainability aspects of human quality of life and Welfare, where he was part of the United Nations program and World Wide Fund

for Nature (WWF) in 1991, stated that sustainable development was only by improving the quality of human life.

As cities expand and expand, cities face resource challenges and deterioration in the social, physical and natural environment that affect the welfare of individuals in many developing and developed countries. The provision of services and facilities to the city's population has been limited and Unequal, and the quality of life varies from region to region. From the above, the problem can be posed as follows:

- How effective are social indicators in assessing the effectiveness of country policies according to the new perspective of development?

Thus, this problem can be divided into the following sub-questions:

- What are the reasons for developed countries to adopt the quality of life and its indicators as a mechanism to keep up with the developments of the times? Moreover, where lies the most important obstacles?
- What is the quality of life in Italy?

The descriptive and analytical approach has been followed, based on some of the indicators adopted through the BES Report and the Stiglitz Commission.

The problem of this paper will be addressed by trying to answer the previous sub-questions by addressing two main axes:

*First axis: The need to adopt the concept of quality of life and the impact of social indicators on the path of countries development.*

*The second axis: Italy's experience in quality of life.*

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 First Axis- The Need to Adopt the Concept of Quality of Life and the impact of Social Indicators on the Path of Countries Development.**

Although the concept of quality of life is a modern term, this does not negate the existence of some of the scientists and philosophers who referred to it in the very old where they addressed the ancient roots of these contemporary ideas for the quality of life. Among the questions of these philosophers in the fifth century, BC was about the best life for the individual. (Michalos, 2015)

Many researchers believe that quality of life is an important variable for measuring sustainable development, although the Brundtland report addresses the needs of current generations without compromising the needs of future generations. The same report speaks of the importance of improving the quality of life not only to meet the needs of generations but to meet the aspirations for New life. (Michalos, 2017)

#### **2.1.1 Quality of Life Concept**

If the individual's life span is limited to each individual's life span, the quality of life of each person varies according to the different views or the different fields in which they are presented. What some consider self-indulgence may be the opposite of the other. Old philosophers such as Hippocrates and Homer and others answer the question of what a good life is. (Michalos, 2015).

The term quality of life has become popular only in the 21st century. Several studies have emerged to shed light on its definition and how it has been measured and used to try to build new measures for social progress. These social indicators are based on two aspects:

psychological and social, Quality of life seeks well-being in a variety of social areas such as health, work, finance, productivity, sustainability and others (Anderson, 2015).

### **2.1.2 Date of the Appearance of the Quality of Life**

The origin of the term quality of life dates back to 1932, when the economist Peugeot referred to the possibility of quantitative measurement of social services or the costs of social decisions as a means of estimating the net social product and therefore applying the concept of quality of life for the first time. This was followed by several concerns of some Scandinavian authors who proposed linking living standards To meet social needs, but for decades no progress has been made in developing the well-being of States, that is, the concept of quality of life has not been applicable.

In 1974, Esterlin proposed linking the economy to self-worth and happiness, stressing that the economic prosperity of each country does not necessarily affect the quality of life assessment of each person. In 1976, Campbell, Converse and Rodgers found that the quality of life in America in terms of evaluation and satisfaction became the subject of the hour, considering the relationship between the conditions and mental state of individuals was incomplete, and therefore in order to be adapted to the quality of life of individuals it was necessary to Ask the question to describe how he (he-she) feels individuals.

In 1977, ESTES established the National Social Vulnerability Index, which became the National Social Progress Index in 1985, whereby Internet services are measured to provide for social services by satisfying the basic social needs of the country. The latter pointed out that there are systematic economic and political forces that have delayed the patterns of social development in the world. They have worked for the economically advanced countries to serve the path of development, while they served as global social determinants to meet the needs of developing countries. (Tonon, 2016)

### **2.1.3 Quality of Life Social Indicators**

The term social indicators appeared in the early 1960's, by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, where there was a project to develop a system of social indicators to detect and anticipate social changes, in addition to evaluating programs and determining their effects. The academic project in the Bauer (1966), entitled Social Indicators (Maggino, a life devoted to quality of life, Social indicators research series, 2016).

According to the previous volume of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, social indicators are defined as statistics, statistical series, and all other types of evidence that enable us to evaluate where we have fallen while respecting our values and goals (Bauer 1966, p1). From this point on, the research began to develop and develop objective social indicators starting with the identity since 1960 and continued until the present time. The focus was on the development of statistics that reflect the importance of social conditions and their classification within areas of social nature.

- Measuring social conditions.
- Identify the area of social interest.

The first approach to this process was undertaken in the 1970s by a group of experts, sociologists and statisticians, and several approaches were applied to them, such as the Social Change Index (Sheldon and Moore 1968), the Life Level Approach in Sweden (Erickson 1974) ), And approach the objectives of the Commission, but it is not confirmed

that the circumstances are related to people's experience of happiness, or satisfaction of life and self-welfare, which encouraged workers to measure the quality of life. (Maggino, a life devoted to quality of life, Social indicators research series, 2016).

### **2.1.3.a. Education**

Education is a cultural and social process that brings people together in school communities, research opportunities and friendship groups (Vaughan et Walken 2012, p. 508). Education enhances people's quality of life, their human potential by providing a source of social support, To build citizenship, and is in line with the proposals set out in the Quality of Life Statement, for the community (Tonon, 2016).

### **2.1.3.b. Health**

Health is one of the vital components of quality of life. In this regard, Schneider et al. (2002) point out that there are two types of inequality: inequality in health status and inequality in health services. In the case of death or illness, while most health services are measured according to need, according to availability, and according to their efficiency and effectiveness, it is a multidimensional concept that takes into account not only the distribution of health attention). Then health policy requires a distinction between equality in health achievements and the distribution of health resources (Tonon, 2016).

The goal of using quality of life in the health field is to know the impact of health failure on the quality of life throughout the life cycle and to determine what constitutes a good life through treatment and care. (Michalos, 2017)

The high age of the population requires an increase in the quality and effectiveness of health care and social support services required by the growing elderly sector. (Mokhtari, 2017).

### **2.1.3.c. Cultural Diversity**

This means that culture is the symbolic dimension, which expresses social practices. The meaning of identity, in terms of its complex self-meaning and social relations, is the daily social interaction, and cultural diversity is inherent in every society. This was done internally or with other communities with a common identity, which is combined with factors such as age, sex, religion, nationality, etc. These factors determine the characteristics of the individual or members of the group in terms of their social identity. Exhaustion Culture. It requires its existence from the outset, and the distinction between identities requires stability in time and value as much as it is central value, where individuals organise their relationships with other members of the world.

### **2.1.3.d. Environment**

According to the United Nations Environment Conference in Stockholm in 1972, whose ideas were confirmed by the World Conference on Environment held in Brazil in 1992, the environment considered a set of physical, chemical, biological and social components capable of directly and indirectly affecting living organisms, Short-term and long-term activities. In this context, reference was made to an ecosystem that is vulnerable to degradation. This system contains interrelated elements, including the human element. Therefore, the low quality of the above elements will be the result of human activity, The latter, C. Impact in whole or in part on the course of human life.

### ***2.1.3.e. Satisfaction with Life***

This indicator reflects the type of life that individuals believe they live. In fact, this indicator can be measured in several areas and not in one area. Diener (2005) considers that the areas of satisfaction are the differences that individuals make in assessing the different aspects of their lives, In-depth understanding of their level of satisfaction should ask the question of how important life is to them, how they enjoy their lives, and how much they want to change them. According to Marx (2004), satisfaction with life includes satisfaction, happiness and enjoyment, with a belief in autonomy, pleasure in life, and curiosity (Tonon, 2016).

### ***2.1.4 Uses of Quality of Life and its Impact on the Path of Development of Countries***

The overall development assessment is more comprehensive if it includes social indicators or indicators of social well-being such as education, economics, health, public safety, social and cultural aspects, etc. The quality of urban life has become an essential issue as urbanisation is increasingly associated with environmental degradation and cultural erosion, and several social and economic problems (see Marans and Stimson 2011).

The assessment of the sustainability of urban life is essential to assess the inequality between urban areas in society and environmental terms across different regions and helps identify social, economic and other problems faced by the neighbourhood communities and identifies policies and programs that may be addressed by stakeholders. (Saitlunga, 2017).

One of the most important goals of social indicators is the assessment of public well-being, quality of life, and social progress. These concepts are becoming more accountable, and usually, the question is to question how individuals feel in general. (Holden, 2017).

Quality of life has many uses in life and society as a whole and plays a vital role in achieving local development and improving the course of development in each country. Among the uses that serve this paper are:

- Heritage is an essential factor in landscape quality and quality of life:

There is no doubt that heritage is an essential component in the quality of landscape and quality of life, and the revival of heritage increases the quality of life, and cultural heritage spatial potential and economic development, expand the quality of the landscape and the quality of life as a whole. (Grifoni, 2018).

## ***2.2 The Second Axis: Italy's Experience in Quality of Life***

In Venice, for example, several contributions have been made to recent research on the quality of life agenda and improved measurement of the conceptual dimensions of the new term by identifying new indicators for measuring the quality of life. Social conditions.

### ***2.2.1 Experience of Italy***

In 2011, Italy launched the BES project for equitable and sustainable well-being under the joint initiative of the Italian National Statistical Office (ISTAT) and CNEL (National Advisory Body for Italian Economy and Business).

The aim of this project is to assess the progress of Italian society not only economically, but also socially and environmentally, by developing additional indicators to complement the indicators of production and economic activity, such as welfare indicators in parallel with the measures of justice and sustainability.



This project is based on the results of the Committee for the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress. In order to eliminate this project, a scientific committee was set up in 2011, open to representatives of a wide range of civil society organisations. It also presented the first report on sustainable and sustainable welfare in Italy in 2013, which focused on the idea of using GDP as a measure of the welfare of the country.

After the Second World War as a necessary criterion for policy-making in the world, but was not used in the best way and did not achieve the desired goals, because the use of this indicator in measuring social performance more complex than economic performance, which lies the challenge, which was proposed to both the makers Decision or citizen N all both alternative point of view and comprehensive measurement of development and growth, such as the adoption multi-dimensional approach proposed by the Commission Stiglitz to measure the welfare of the people rather than measuring economic output, and this does not necessarily ignore the GDP means. (Maggino, 2015).

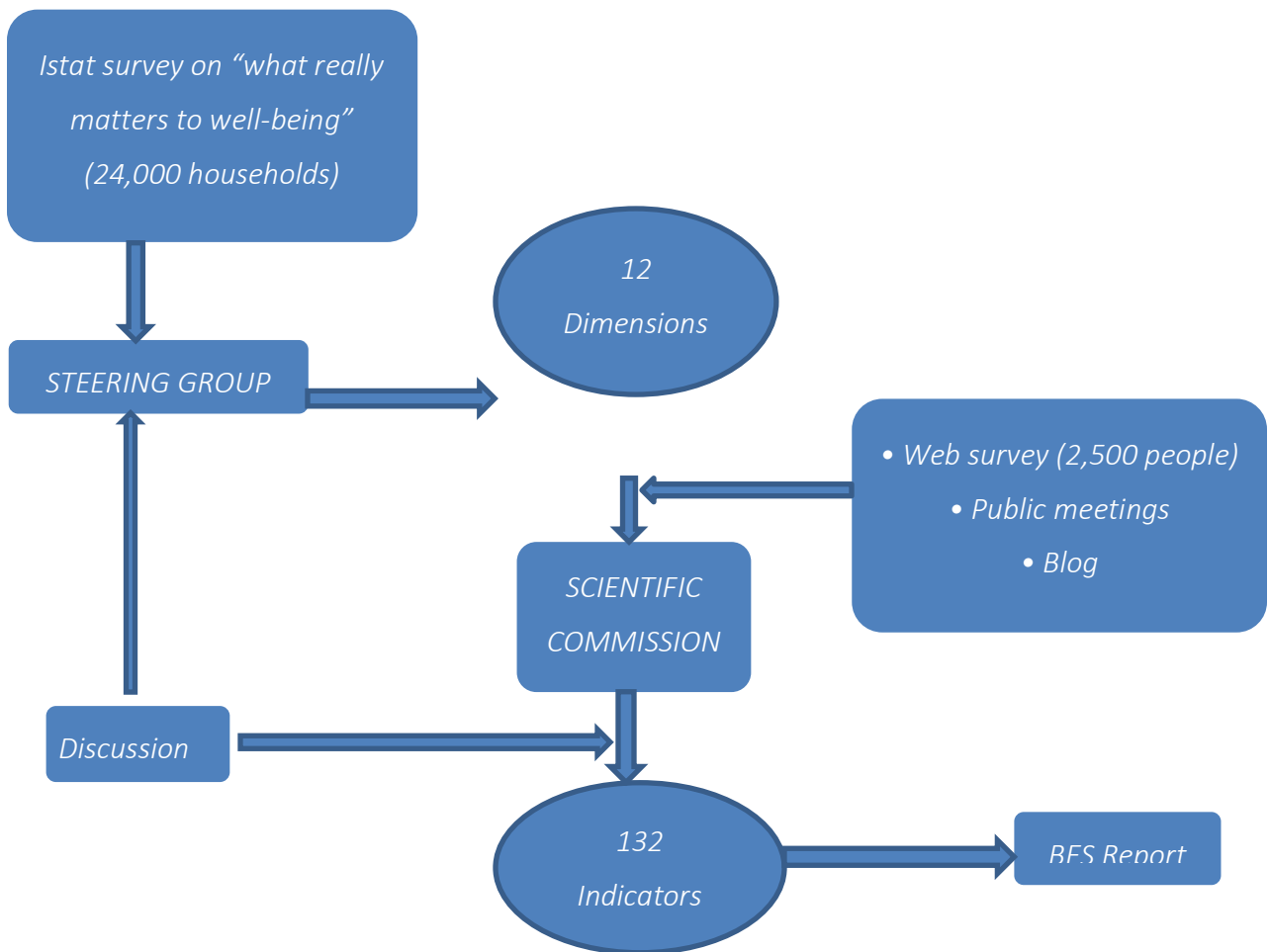
**Table(1):** "The welfare dimensions proposed by the BES project and the Stiglitz Commission"

BES project	Stiglitz Commission
Education and training	Education
Work and life balance	Personal activities including work
Economic well-being	Material living standards (income, consumptions and wealth)
Social relationships	Social connections and relationships
Politics and institutions	Political voice and governance
Safety	Insecurity, of an economic as well as physical naturea
Subjective well-being	
Landscape and cultural heritage	
Environment	Environment (present and future conditions)
Research and innovations	
Quality of services	

**Source:** Maggino Filamena: A new research agenda for improvements of quality of life, social indicators research series, workshop 2, 2003, p01, Volume 57, Michalos C Alex, Springer, 2015, Switzerland, P: 3.

Thus, the safety in the project of equitable and sustainable welfare excludes economic insecurity, which falls within the economic well-being. The research focuses on the current trends affecting the well-being of the population through the 12 dimensions mentioned in the table.

The evaluation seems to have been positive, with justice achieved through long-term social cohesion and sustainability, which will not be based on consumption from renewable resources or imposing additional burdens on future generations. (Maggino, 2015).



**Figure(1)** Development of the Fair and Sustainable Welfare Project (BES Project). According to (Costanzo and Ferrara,).

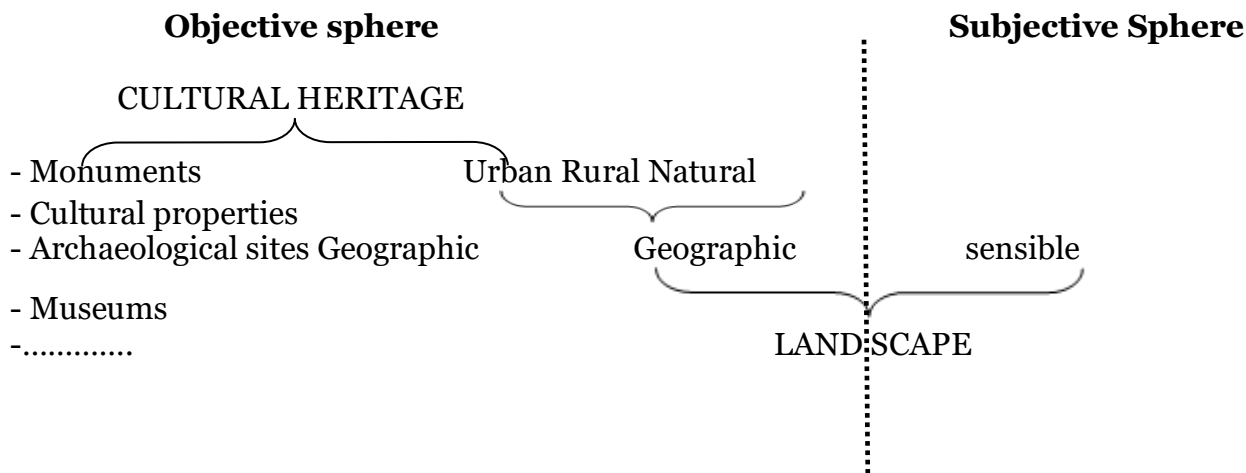
**Source:** Maggino Filamena: A new research agenda for improvements of quality of life, social indicators research series, workshop 2, 2003, p01, Volume 57, Michalos C Alex, Springer, 2015, Switzerland, P:4

### 2.2.2 Landscape Welfare Index

The classical distinction proposed by the biographer of Biassutti in 1962 began between the geographical view of the thematic field, which he considered an abstract picture of nature, and the sensitive landscapes in the self-sphere, which are linked to individual perception. On the one hand, it can be considered appropriate for the well-being of the individual. In daily life affect the quality of life of individuals is not aesthetic in terms of nature, but also terms

of sensory and symbolic, and on the other hand is related to the substantive area in terms of its relevance to the quality of life collective, as it is an essential witness on local history, traditions, culture and others.

Landscapes give the historical path a unique identity, linking the cultural value of the land with the public interest (heritage) to preserve it, as the geographical landscape is an integral part of the cultural heritage, as it resulted from long-term interaction between humanity and nature. As part of the BES project, landscapes are associated with the environmental dimension, as well as with collective well-being. This is also true of nature reserves, national parks and others on the self-side. (Maggino, 2015).



**Figure(2)** Conceptual Framework for Landscape and Cultural Heritage by (Costanzo and Ferrara,).

**Source:** Maggino Filamena: A new research agenda for improvements of quality of life, social indicators research series, workshop 2, 2003, p01, Volume 57, Michalos C Alex, Springer, 2015, Switzerland, P: 6

### 2.2.3 Sensitive Landscape Welfare Index

To assess the subjective aspects of sensitive landscapes, the ISTAT survey developed two questions about aspects of daily life for individuals:

- Do you consider that the landscape in the place where you live has been clearly deteriorated? (Yes /No).
- Which of the following concerns you most?
  - Global warming - Ozone hole - Extinction of plant / animal species - Calibration of climate
  - Global warming - Waste production and disposal - Noise - Air pollution - Soil pollution - Pollution of seas and inland waters - Floods - Earthquakes - Deforestation - Electromagnetic Pollution Natural due to the excessive increase in buildings - depletion of natural resources and others.

Through the first question, this indicator aims to identify the cases of misery associated with the respondents' views of the negative daily state of the landscape. The second question is to measure social concern about landscape protection. These two questions reflect the need to enjoy the landscape as a factor in the quality of life and awareness of the value of the landscape as a common commodity for all members of society. (Maggino, 2015).



### **3 Results of the Proposed Indicators**

- People who are not satisfied with the quality of the landscape in their places of residence, and who are affected by the deterioration of the landscape in 2012, accounted for 18.3%, although their percentage varies according to the region along the north-south axis of 6.8%, from the province of Trinetto to 31.1%, from Campania.
- In terms of degradation of natural areas, among the most severe environmental problems of the population, is the deterioration and decline of the landscape due to the urban expansion of buildings, and the proportion of individuals reached 20.4% in 2012, compared with 15.8% in 1998. (Maggino, 2015).
- Suggested indicators for the substantive aspect of cultural heritage and natural geography. In order to analyze the geographical landscape, the area was divided into three main areas (urban-rural-natural). Each region has specific problems, with emphasis on parts of Italian cultural heritage such as donations Heritage, heritage management and preservation costs by local authorities, as well as the fight against illegal construction.
- The focus was on the protection of landscapes and rural areas as one of the most important objectives of the strategy for the Rural Development Plan (2007-2013), where landscape was considered as a key resource for the production of added value for tourism products, for the development of tourism and biodiversity of agricultural areas, In rural areas of Italy, these areas cover most of the land. Despite the protection of historical centers and natural areas, recognition of legislation continues to be particularly vulnerable to rural landscapes, for the production of the most profitable agricultural crops, N traditional agriculture, agriculture and competition for real estate in the surrounding urban areas.
- The erosion of stable and active agricultural areas due to the expansion of cities or the so-called urban extension, as well as the abandonment of farmers.
- Among the comprehensive indicators are the donations of cultural heritage items, the number of monuments, monuments and museums surveyed in Italy's Cultural Heritage Risk Map, an information system maintained by the Ministry of Heritage and Cultural Activities in Italy, per square kilometre. The indicator represents the regional distribution of cultural heritage. At the end of 2012, an average of 33.3 square kilometers was surveyed in Italy, where a high density of heritage elements was matched by a relatively low population, such as UMBRIA, MARCHE and TUSCANY, which are the best areas to protect and value their heritage as a factor of well-being As well as making full use of their potential in regional marketing.
- Italian municipalities spend about 45% of the national public expenditure on the culture at a rate of 10.5 Euro per capita (2010). This amount is distributed by region and per capita income, ranging from 5 Euro per person in southern Italy to 12 Euro in the middle, 14 euros in northern Italy. (Maggino, 2015).
- The illegal construction index, which is the percentage of the number of unauthorised buildings to the number of building permits issued by municipalities. This indicator refers to governance and the protection of public goods from speculation. Illegal construction not only harms landscapes but also affects the credibility of local governments. Encourages negative behaviour, reaching 5% of illegal building production in the north, 10% in the centre, and 30% in the south.
- The rate of urbanisation in areas subject to building restrictions. According to the Italian Law on Landscape Protection, the number of buildings completed in Italy after 1987 is subject to building restrictions under Law No. 1985/431. According to the Law of Galapso

1985<sup>23</sup>, Inland waters, mountain areas and other areas with the special environment. The coastal areas are the most attractive for construction, with an average of 437 buildings per square kilometre in 1984. Twenty years later, in 2004, the figure rose to 540 buildings per square kilometre, an increase of 23.6%.

- Several indicators have been developed for rural landscapes, with the erosion of agricultural land due to urbanisation and migration. The surface of agricultural areas affected by urbanisation has reached abnormal levels of abnormal decline, which have been met with an increase in urban population.
- Twenty-six agricultural areas with urban cover, representing 20% of the population, are mostly concentrated in the centre and north, while the erosion of these areas is affected
- Twenty-six agricultural areas were affected by urban cover, representing 20% of the population, mostly concentrated in the centre and north, while the erosion of these areas has a more significant overall impact at the national level (28.3%), but less concentrated in the south, especially in the towns of BOLZANO ET TORENTO), Which are less threatening to eat in rural areas.
- Most of the critical situations are concentrated in the suburbs of LIGURIA ET VENETO, where large parts of the countryside have been converted into low-density suburbs, where productive, commercial and residential uses are mixed with agricultural areas, which is a model of unsustainable development, Soil consumption, and increased reliance on private mobility, negatively affecting individual well-being, as well as social well-being as a whole
- The existence of historical rural landscapes taking into account the arrangement of areas according to the number of sites classified from the national part of the historical landscape of the countryside, according to the draft of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policy, the historical rural areas are an integral part of the local cultural heritage.
- The existence of urban parks and historical parks classified as the historical legacy of Italy.
- Preservation of historical urban centres. The proportion of inhabited buildings constructed before 1919, 60%, is still in good condition. Therefore, the preservation of rural landscapes and historical centres is related to well-being, according to 2001 statistics and data. Approximately two out of ten buildings still inhabited, such as CAMPANIA ET CALABRIA ET SICILY, are up to 75% in UMBRIA ET TUSCANY.
- Two indicators were proposed on the self-side, the first indicator of people dissatisfied with the quality of the scene in the place where they live, and the second indicator concern the deterioration of the landscape, two indicators showing the complex relationship between well-being and the visual perception (Magginò, 2015).

#### **4 Discussions and Conclusion**

Social indicators in Italy are highly effective in achieving the path of sustainable local development and development. The following points clearly illustrate this:

- The geographical or natural landscape is an integral part of cultural heritage, as it results from long-term interaction between humans and nature.
- According to the BES project, the landscape in the thematic area concerns the environmental dimension, and the project is concerned with measuring the collective contribution to welfare index, which is expressed in the preservation of natural heritage.
- Although social indicators have been changed by region in Italian society, they have been compiled in the first BES report, under the title "ISTAT AND CNEL 2013", reflecting the state of cultural heritage and landscape. Best use of its valuable resources by identifying, preserving and protecting them as common goods.

• Despite the great importance of Italy's cultural heritage, it does not receive adequate public expenditure, while the landscape has witnessed several threats to increase construction and radical changes in agriculture since 1960, which has led to the reduction of large areas of its farms.

• In general, the main problem in hindering Italian development is the weakness of local authorities' attention to urban planning and regional governance, resulting in a growing sense of discontent among the Italian population, in terms of dissatisfaction with the landscape where they live. The deterioration of nature, is a disturbing sign for the country, which has long been called the Garden of Europe.

Finally, the experience of Italy is considered to be one of the internationally successful experiences in the quality of life, especially in the assessment of sustainable social welfare of landscapes and cultural heritage, being a vital local economic resource in bringing in hard currency and attracting tourism resources. Despite the lack of public spending that is devoted to its maintenance and protection, these resources contributed in one way, or another to advancing the path of development and new development. This development brought together sustainability and social welfare, especially in the field of cultural and natural heritage, which was formed over many years the Italian identity and made it distinctive from the rest of the Europeans and other international identities.

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