EURISPES
ISTITUTO DI STUDI
POLITICI ECONOMICI E SOCIALI

EURISPES: EXCLUSION INDEX – SUMMARY (2025)

1. Introduction

In the Italian Constitution, the fundamental rights of the individual are not confined to abstract declarations; rather, they require concrete material and structural conditions that make their effective exercise possible. The rights to work, education, health, social and cultural participation, equal treatment, and territorial equity form the pillars of a substantive democracy – one in which equality must be real, not merely formal.

Yet, the distance between the legal recognition of these rights and their actual implementation remains wide and often invisible when observed through partial or purely economic instruments. Italy in 2025 still exhibits deep territorial fractures in the realization of its constitutional rights. Seventy-seven years after the Constitution came into force, the promise of substantive equality remains largely unfulfilled, outlining a framework of an "unfinished democracy," where "parallel Italies" coexist – characterized by differing opportunities, rights, and dignities.

It is from this awareness that **Eurispes** has decided to undertake a specific study focused on the creation and analysis of an **Exclusion Index**, conceived as a multidimensional tool to measure, at the regional level, the extent and ways in which constitutional rights are unfulfilled in citizens' everyday lives. The chosen approach does not merely capture economic inequalities but seeks to map the multiple forms of marginalization that still today limit the full citizenship of millions of people – processes that represent structural outcomes of historical exclusion rather than temporary developmental delays.

The Exclusion Index: Structure and Dimensions

The **Exclusion Index** is articulated into **seven key areas**, each representing a fundamental dimension of the effective enjoyment of citizenship rights:

1. **Work** – Stability and employment conditions, measured through indicators related to job quality, precariousness, and employment opportunities.
2. **Economy** – Economic deprivation and fragility, analyzed through indicators of poverty, household economic difficulties, and access to credit.
3. **Social Rights** – Community bonds and social participation, designed to capture the real possibility of engaging in social and cultural life.
4. **Access to Services** – Physical availability and actual usability of services for citizens and families, considering both provision and territorial accessibility.
5. **Health** – Availability of healthcare and living conditions, interpreted through the dual aspect of access to healthcare and the environmental and social determinants of well-being.
6. **Education and Knowledge** – With a particular focus on attendance, school dropout, acquired skills, and the inclusiveness of the educational system.
7. **Cross-Cutting Rights**– Environment, security, and trust in institutions, which constitute the material and immaterial infrastructure for exercising all other rights.

Each dimension represents a fragment of the whole, but only through their integration can one grasp the complexity of Italy's territorial inequalities and identify the **self-perpetuating cycles of exclusion** that cut across multiple domains of life.

Methodological Foundations

The methodological construction of the **Exclusion Index** is based on the **Mazziotta–Pareto method**, a well-established approach in territorial analysis known for its ability to synthesize heterogeneous information and integrate variables with differing polarities. This method simultaneously reflects both the average intensity of exclusion and internal imbalances among the various domains, statistically penalizing territories with significant disparities through the **Coefficient of Variation**.

The process unfolded through several sequential stages:

- **Selection of 149 indicators**, distributed across the seven thematic areas, chosen based on their significance in describing the phenomenon and the availability of comparable regional data.
- **Normalization and polarity management** of the indicators to ensure methodological consistency.
- **Application of the Mazziotta–Pareto method**, including penalties for internal imbalances, thereby highlighting patterns of systemic vulnerability.

The indicators were first aggregated into **sectoral indices** for each thematic area, and subsequently into an **overall Index** combining all dimensions. This provides a comprehensive view of the degree of territorial exclusion. The final Index – both for each individual area and in its synthetic overall version – typically assumes values between **70 and 130**, where higher values correspond to higher levels of exclusion. This range facilitates the immediate identification of both the most virtuous regions and those most penalized.

Analytical Value and Interpretive Scope

The adopted methodological framework allows not only for **comparisons among regions** regarding their level of experienced exclusion but also for the identification of **internal asymmetries** across different domains. It distinguishes between contexts suffering from widespread marginalization and others exhibiting more selective imbalances.

Indeed, the most vulnerable territorial areas are often not penalized on a single front but rather display a **systemic cycle of exclusion** that reinforces itself, compromising multiple life domains simultaneously. This integrated reading offers a tool not only for measurement but also for **policy reflection**, aimed at guiding interventions that restore coherence between the **constitutional promise of equality** and the **everyday realities** of Italian citizens.

2. The Italian Map of Exclusion

The Exclusion Index: An Overview

The **Exclusion Index**, constructed by aggregating the seven thematic domains that measure the effective enjoyment of constitutional rights, offers a clear picture of the territorial inequalities running through contemporary Italy. By the very nature of the methodology adopted, the national average of

the Index is around **100 points**, but values range from **93.9** in **Trentino-Alto Adige** – the lowest level of exclusion recorded nationally – to **109.3** in **Calabria**, which ranks first for severity of exclusion.

To facilitate comparative reading, Italy's **20 regions** have been classified into **four levels of exclusion** corresponding to the distribution's quartiles: **"high," "medium–high," "medium–low,"** and **"low."**

The **Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions** confirms itself as the area where exclusion takes on the most intense and multidimensional features. The **"high"** exclusion band is occupied by **five southern regions**: **Calabria (109.3), Campania (109.1), Sicily (107.8), Apulia/Puglia (105.7),** and **Basilicata (104.2)**. In these territories, the Index exceeds **102 points** across all domains (with the exception of Basilicata in the "Education" and "Cross-Cutting Rights" domains and Calabria again for "Cross-Cutting Rights"), indicating structural conditions of marginalization that cut across all spheres of citizenship. **Calabria**, in particular, shows dramatic values in nearly all domains: **114.4** in the social domain, **above 112** in the economic and labor domains, while even **education (104.1)** and **health (109.9)** post scores above the national average.

The **"medium–high"** exclusion band includes **Molise (103.8), Sardinia (103.0), Abruzzo (101.8), Lazio (101.7),** and **Liguria (99.5)**. **Lazio** bears the weight of contradictions concentrated in the capital city and its metropolitan area – typical issues of large urban conurbations – alongside the marginalization of areas far from the Roman hub; **Liguria** is a special case as the only northern region in this band, mainly due to demographic, morphological, and service-accessibility challenges.

The **"medium–low"** band groups **five regions** with **balanced but not excellent** performance: **Piedmont (99.2), Umbria (98.9), Marche (98.0), Veneto (97.6),** and **Tuscany (97.6)**. These territories show overall system stability with sectoral weaknesses that do not compromise the general balance. **Veneto**, in particular, stands out as a highly competitive area able to contain social fragilities, though it does not reach the excellence of neighboring North-Eastern regions.

The **"low"** exclusion band comprises the **five most virtuous regions**: **Lombardy (96.8), Emilia–Romagna (96.7), Friuli–Venezia Giulia (96.0), Aosta Valley/Valle d'Aosta (95.3),** and **Trentino-Alto Adige (93.9)**. Here, the composite Index never exceeds **97 points**, with an average around **95**, indicating more widespread and stable structural well-being. **Trentino-Alto Adige** registers the lowest value overall, with excellent performance in most domains – especially **social inclusion (90.0)**, **services (92.4)**, and the **right to work (93.1)** – confirming the territory's longstanding capacity to provide material conditions favorable to full citizenship.

Territorial analysis clearly reveals the persistence of a **structural North–South dualism** that extends beyond economic well-being to all major dimensions of social inclusion. Northern regions not only record the lowest Index values but also show greater stability and coherence across domains, suggesting more functional and integrated socioeconomic systems; by contrast, southern regions are characterized by widespread vulnerability cutting across all domains, amounting to a **systemic and persistent condition of exclusion**.

This geography of exclusion is not the outcome of cyclical dynamics or simple developmental delays; it reflects the **layered historical processes of territorial marginalization**, calling public policies to account and underscoring the **urgency of structural rebalancing strategies** oriented toward territorial justice and substantive equality.

Territorial Distribution of Exclusion Classes

The full set of **149 indicators** was broken down for each region into **four classes** corresponding to increasing levels of exclusion, determined by each region's position for each specific indicator: **low (class 1), medium-low (class 2), medium–high (class 3),** and **high (class 4)**. This approach makes it possible to pinpoint each territory's **relative position** within the national landscape, highlighting not only absolute performance but also patterns of **virtuous specialization** and, above all, **persistent critical nuclei**.

Among the regions with the **highest share of indicators in class 1** – that is, where exclusion is least pronounced – **Trentino-Alto Adige** stands out with an extraordinary performance: **over half** of its indicators (**56.4%**, i.e., **84 out of 149**) fall in the lowest exclusion band, followed by **Aosta Valley** with **46.9%** in class 1 (**69 out of 147** available), **Veneto** and **Emilia–Romagna** tied at **42.3%** (**63 indicators each**), and **Lombardy** and **Friuli–Venezia Giulia** also tied at **40.3%** (**60** each).

These data point to a generally more favorable situation in the **northern regions**, particularly the **North-East**, compared with the rest of the country. The distance from the other regions is especially evident considering that **Marche** ranks seventh with **only 25.5%** of indicators in class 1 (**39 out of 149**), signaling a significant gap between areas of excellence and the rest of the national territory.

At the opposite end are the **southern regions**, where **class 4** – the highest intensity of exclusion – assumes alarming proportions, constituting real **social and territorial emergencies**. In **Calabria**, **59.7%** of indicators (**89 out of 149**) fall in this critical band, followed by **Campania** with **59.1%** (**88**), **Sicily** with **57.0%** (**85**), and **Apulia/Puglia** with **47.0%** (**70**). In these territories, **more than 4 out of 10 indicators** point to structural conditions of severe inequality, social marginalization, limited access to services, economic fragility, and weak territorial cohesion networks.

Cumulative frequency analysis reinforces this **dual reading** of the national territory. Considering the combined share of classes **1 and 2** (low and medium-low exclusion) versus **3 and 4** (high and medium–high exclusion), the **North** clearly outperforms the **South and Islands**, with the **Center** acting as a transition area. The cumulative share of the first two classes reaches very high levels in the northern regions: **Friuli–Venezia Giulia (75.8%)**, **Trentino-Alto Adige (75.2%)**, **Lombardy (73.8%)**, and **Aosta Valley (73.5%)** lead the national ranking.

Overall, the **11 regions** with a **majority of indicators** in the low and medium-low exclusion bands belong to: **4 in the North-East, 4 in the North-West, and 3 in Central Italy**. **No southern or island region** appears in this virtuous group.

Conversely, **very high concentrations** of indicators in the **higher exclusion classes (3–4)** are prevalent in the **Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions**: **Campania (83.2%)**, **Apulia/Puglia (82.6%)**, **Sicily (76.5%)**, **Calabria (73.8%)**, and **Molise (67.8%)** occupy the top positions in this negative ranking. Regions with a majority of indicators assigned to the higher exclusion classes number **eight in the Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions** (six in the South and two in the Islands) and **only one** in Central Italy (**Lazio**).

Some regions form a **particularly interesting intermediate group**, displaying a more balanced distribution with indicators concentrated mainly in the **intermediate classes**. This is the case of **Abruzzo, Lazio, and Umbria**, where there is a greater concentration of indicators in the **medium–high** exclusion class than in the **medium-low** one; and of **Tuscany, Piedmont, Marche,** and **Liguria**,

where the reverse holds. Such situations point to **sectoral, but not systemic, criticalities**, suggesting **targeted, selective interventions** rather than comprehensive rebalancing strategies.

Territorial Imbalances in the Implementation of Constitutional Rights

To precisely measure territorial variability in indicator values, a **Coefficient of Variation (CV)** was calculated for each indicator. The CV is a percentage value that quantifies dispersion around the national average and provides a concise assessment of interregional inequalities: a **high CV** signals strong territorial heterogeneity and, consequently, **lower equity** in guaranteeing that constitutional right across geography.

The data confirm **widespread regional disparities**, with significant critical peaks in specific domains. Average CV values are non-negligible across all domains, indicating that territorial inequalities pervade the entire spectrum of constitutional rights. Overall, **44.3%** of the **149 indicators** exhibit a **high or very high CV** (**above 30%**). Of these, **16.8% (25 indicators)** have a **CV above 50%**, while **6 indicators** exceed the **very high critical threshold of 100%**; **38 indicators (25.5%)** show **low inequality** (**CV below 15%**), and **45 indicators (30.2%)** show **moderate inequality** (**CV between 15% and 30%**).

Of the **six indicators** exceeding the **100%** variability threshold, **three** belong to **Cross-Cutting Rights** and are all **environmental** in nature: **availability of urban green areas (CV 140%)**, **population exposed to flood risk (123%)**, and **energy produced from renewable sources (105%)**. The other three critical indicators fall into different domains: **graduate migration rate** (Labor), **severe material and social deprivation** (Economy), and **share of population residing in municipalities with no offer of entertainment, culture, or sports** (Social Rights).

Indicators with **low variability (CV < 15%)** concentrate above all in the **Health** domain (**10 out of 38 indicators, 26.3%**), seemingly signaling smaller territorial disparities in this area. However, this requires a **critical, contextualized reading**. **Healthy life expectancy at birth**, for instance, shows a relatively contained CV but ranges from **66.2 years in Trentino-Alto Adige** to **53.1 years in Calabria**: despite appearing statistically modest, this **13-year gap** conceals a substantial disparity in quality of life. The same holds for **avoidable mortality**, which ranges from **15.1% in Trentino-Alto Adige** to **25% in Campania**, highlighting territorial differences in the effectiveness of regional health systems.

Indicators with **very high territorial disparities (CV > 50%)** concentrate mainly in the **Economic** and **Education** domains (**6 indicators out of 25 in each, 24%**), while indicators with **moderate/high dispersion (CV 15–30% and 30–50%)** are most common in the **Services** domain – largely due to the higher number of indicators in this area.

Breaking down inequalities by domain yields a differentiated yet troubling picture:

- **Cross-Cutting Rights**: **average CV 48.2%**, with **63.2%** of indicators above **30%** variability (**26%** above **50%**, **3** above **100%**).
- **Economy**: **average CV 37%**, with **50%** of indicators in high/very high bands (**6** above **50%**, **1** above **100%**).
- **Social**: **average CV 34%**, with **47%** above **30%** variability (**5** in very high band).
- **Services**: **average CV 33.9%**, with **46.4%** in high/very high bands (**13 out of 28 indicators**).

- **Labor**: **average CV 33.2%**, with **33.4%** in high/very high bands (**1** above **100%**).
- **Education**: **average CV 31.6%**, with **43.5%** in high/very high bands (**6** above **50%**).
- **Health**: **average CV 22%**, with **30.4%** in high/very high bands, but **43.5%** with low inequality (apparent homogeneity masking significant qualitative differences).

The **Cross-Cutting Rights** domain – covering environment, security, and institutions – shows the **largest territorial disparities** (average **CV 48.2%**). Of **21 total indicators**, nearly **two out of three (63.2%)** have a **CV above 30%**, with **26%** exceeding **50%** and **three** indicators above **100%**.

The **Economic** domain also shows wide inequalities (**average CV 37%**). Of **16 indicators**, **six** exceed **50%** and **one** surpasses **100%**. The largest gaps – beyond **severe material and social deprivation (CV 110%)** – appear in **households making it to month's end without great difficulty and risk of poverty (CV 58.2%)**, **households having trouble paying mortgages (57.7%)**, **households in relative poverty (54.7%)**, and **households struggling to pay rent (52%)**. These figures point to **deep divides** in Italian households' economic conditions, translating into **radically different life opportunities**.

The **Social** domain records an **average CV of 34%**, with **47%** of indicators above **30%** and **five** in the very high band. Gaps are particularly marked in **density of sports associations**, **women in local political representation**, and **demand for entertainment in inner areas**.

The **Services** domain shows an **average CV of 33.9%**, with **46.4%** in high/very high bands. Standouts include **irregularity in water distribution**, **electricity service interruptions**, and **public transport seat-km offered**, indicating that even **essential services are very unevenly distributed** across the country.

The **Labor** domain has an **average CV of 33.2%**, with **33.4%** of indicators in high/very high bands, including **graduate mobility** exceeding the **100%** threshold.

The **Education** domain posts an **average CV of 31.6%**, with **43.5%** of indicators in high/very high bands. Gaps are particularly sharp in **municipal spending on culture**, **presence of inclusion plans for students with disabilities**, and **university system indicators**, suggesting that **the right to education also encounters significant territorial barriers**.

Finally, the **Health** domain shows **greater relative homogeneity** (**average CV 22%**) and **43.5%** of indicators with low inequality. Nonetheless, significant disparities remain: **seven** indicators show high relative inequality and **five** very high, including **interregional hospital migration**, **trust in the health system**, and **households struggling to meet medical expenses**.

Exclusion from the Right to Work

The right to work is one of the founding pillars of the Italian Republic, as established in **Article 1** of the Constitution, and is further guaranteed by **Articles 4, 35, 36, and 37**, which recognize its value, protect working conditions, and affirm fair pay and gender equality. Exclusion from the right to work is therefore **not reducible to unemployment alone**; it manifests through a plurality of forms: **contractual precariousness, inadequate pay, lack of career prospects, long-term unemployment, generational and gender discrimination, the spread of irregular work**, and the **outflow of skilled human capital** to other parts of the country or abroad.

The **Exclusion from the Right to Work Index** aggregates **21 indicators** measuring different dimensions of labor inclusion. Dispersion in the Index is extremely wide, ranging from a **minimum of 91.8 in Lombardy** to a **maximum of 112.6 in Sicily**.

The **upper end of the ranking** – regions with **greater labor exclusion** – is dominated by the **Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions**: **Sicily (112.6), Calabria (112.3), Campania (110.3), Basilicata (109.9),** and **Apulia/Puglia (108.9)** all fall in the **"high"** exclusion class. These regions concentrate many structural criticalities seen in the single indicators: **youth unemployment rates above 30%**, **long-term unemployment** well **over twice** the national average (reaching **11–13%**), high levels of **involuntary part-time** and **irregular employment** (in some cases **over 19%** of the workforce). **Graduate mobility** is also strongly negative, with **net outflows between 30% and 45%**, signaling a **structural brain drain** to other regions and countries.

The **"medium–high"** band includes **Molise (105.7), Sardinia (104.8),** and **Abruzzo (102.5)**, completing the picture of a Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions in a critical position, joined by **Lazio (98.5)** and **Umbria (98.4)**. The **"medium–low"** band comprises **Marche (97.5), Liguria (97.3), Tuscany (95.7), Aosta Valley (94.5)**, and **Friuli–Venezia Giulia (94.3)**.

The **"low"** exclusion band groups the **five most virtuous regions**: **Veneto (94.2), Piedmont (94.0), Emilia–Romagna (93.6), Trentino-Alto Adige (93.1),** and **Lombardy (91.8)**, the latter posting the **lowest** Index value.

Dimensions of Inequality: Coefficient of Variation in the Labor Domain

Analyzing the **Coefficient of Variation** for each indicator – together with identifying the areas posting the best and worst values – offers an overview of where **territorial disparities** are most concentrated.

- The indicator with the **greatest territorial disparity** is **graduate mobility** (**CV 174.8%**), signaling a yawning gap between territories that **systematically attract highly educated youth** (e.g., **Emilia–Romagna**) and others (e.g., **Basilicata**) that **structurally and irreversibly lose** their qualified resources.
- Next comes **long-term unemployment** (**CV 81.7%**), particularly critical because it measures not just temporary exclusion from the labor market but the risk of **permanent marginalization**. **Trentino-Alto Adige** shows low vulnerability with **just 0.5%** long-term unemployed, while **Campania** is among the worst, approaching **13%**.
- Classic indicators also show very high disparities: **youth unemployment** (**CV 43.1%**) ranges from **6.1% in Trentino-Alto Adige** to **35.5% in Calabria**, a gap of nearly **30 percentage points** that speaks to radically different life chances for younger generations. **Gender employment disparity** (**CV 43%**) underscores that the capacity to integrate women into the labor market is heavily conditioned by territory, with **Campania (46.6%)** and **Calabria (43%)** most critical and **Aosta Valley** most virtuous (**9.8%**). **Smart working** also reveals a two-speed Italy (**CV 38.3%**), with **Lazio** leading and **Apulia/Puglia** lagging far behind.
- Similar disparities appear in **contract-quality indicators**: **involuntary part-time**, **temporary employment**, **irregular work**, and **conversion of temporary to permanent contracts** post CVs between **26.2% and 27.4%**, with the **South and Islands** – especially **Sicily** and **Calabria** – systematically penalized.

- Noteworthy is the **gender gap in involuntary part-time** (**CV 20.7%**), suggesting that gender inequality in access to full-time work is **not confined to the South** but is more **widely distributed** across the country; even here, **Trentino-Alto Adige** performs well, while **Sardinia** shows the widest gap.
- **Structural inclusion indicators** – overall employment rate (**CV 15.3%**), **employment in rural areas (15%)**, and **graduate employment (14.1%)** – show **less but still significant** disparity, with a clear polarization between the **North-East** and the **South**, confirming **two divergent territorial development models**. **Youth entrepreneurship (CV 13.6%)** pits **two southern regions** against each other – **highest in Campania**, **lowest in Molise** – while **female entrepreneurship** peaks in **Molise** and hits bottom in **Trentino–Alto Adige**, though with milder territorial gaps (**CV 8.4%**). The **lowest variability** is seen in the **ratio between employment rates of women with and without young children (8.3%)**; the presence of smaller territorial gaps in gender inclusion does **not** reflect the **absence** of exclusion mechanisms, but rather their **more uniform distribution** nationwide.

Analysis of Labor-Domain Indicators

The overall analysis of the **21 indicators** composing the Exclusion from the Right to Work Index reveals **territorial inequalities** spanning **all dimensions of labor inclusion** – from participation in the labor market to job quality, from contractual stability to opportunities for professional growth.

The territorial pattern is marked by a **pronounced North–South polarization**, with the **Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions** systematically occupying the most critical positions in **almost all indicators** considered. Southern regions simultaneously exhibit **low overall and youth employment**, **high long-term unemployment**, **significant gender gaps** in access to work, a **high incidence of irregular employment**, and **limited capacity to retain qualified human capital**. This cluster of criticalities constitutes a **self-reinforcing system of labor exclusion** that **perpetuates over time**.

In particular, **Calabria, Campania,** and **Sicily** emerge as the most penalized, consistently occupying the bottom positions in most indicators. In these areas, **fewer than half** of people of working age are employed, **fewer than one in four young people** gain access to the labor market, and **long-term unemployment exceeds 10%** of the labor force. At the same time, **irregular work** reaches **alarming levels**, with **nearly one in five workers** lacking contractual and social security protections. **Gender disparities** are dramatic, with **employment gaps exceeding 40 percentage points** between men and women, while **brain drain** reaches intensities that jeopardize future development prospects.

By contrast, **North-Eastern and North-Western** regions show **virtuous performance** in most indicators, with **dynamic, inclusive labor markets** capable of generating **quality employment**. **Trentino–Alto Adige, Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia–Romagna,** and **Friuli–Venezia Giulia** stand out for **high overall and youth employment**, **low unemployment**, **more balanced gender access**, and a **strong capacity to attract qualified talent**. In these regions, **innovative organizational models** such as **smart working** are more widespread, **temporary-to-permanent conversions** are more frequent, and **over-education** is less prevalent.

Central Italy occupies an **intermediate position**, with performance generally **above the national average** but not reaching the North's excellence. **Tuscany, Marche, Umbria,** and – partly – **Lazio** display **relatively balanced labor markets**, with **sectoral criticalities** that do not undermine overall

system stability. However, weaknesses remain, especially regarding the **retention of young graduates** and the **reduction of gender disparities** in access to quality work.

A particularly significant finding is the **strong correlation** among the various indicators of labor exclusion. Regions with **low employment rates** tend to exhibit **high irregularity**, **pronounced gender gaps**, **high contractual precariousness**, and **substantial outflows of qualified human capital**. This **systematic co-occurrence** of exclusions suggests the existence of **structurally different territorial development models**, producing **virtuous or vicious cycles** of labor inclusion or marginalization.

The condition of **women in the labor market** is particularly critical – especially in the South – where the **largest gender gaps** coincide with **higher female involuntary part-time** and **greater difficulties reconciling motherhood with work**. This is especially striking given **higher female educational attainment** on average, pointing to a **significant waste of human capital**.

Analysis of **graduate mobility** further reveals a **territorial redistribution system of human capital**, with southern regions acting as **"suppliers"** of qualified skills to the North's labor markets. This is not merely an economic loss for the regions of origin; it **amplifies territorial inequalities**, undermining the prospects for **endogenous development** in the Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions.

Overall, the labor-domain indicators confirm a **structural dualism** in the Italian labor market, characterized by the coexistence of territories with **labor inclusion levels comparable to Europe's most advanced standards** and others where **exclusion from the right to work** takes on **systemic and pervasive features**.

3. Economic Exclusion Index

Economic exclusion is one of the most direct forms of denial of constitutional rights, undermining personal dignity and the ability to participate fully in the social and economic life of the country. **Article 3** of the Constitution requires the Republic to remove the economic and social obstacles that de facto limit citizens' equality, while **Article 36** establishes the right to remuneration that is proportionate and sufficient to ensure a free and dignified existence. The constitutional amendment of **7 November 2022** further strengthened the principle of **territorial equity**, underscoring how economic disparities among different areas of the country constitute a matter of constitutional significance.

The **Economic Exclusion Index** is built by aggregating **16 specific indicators** that measure different dimensions of the economic well-being of households and individuals. Index values range from a **low of 92.9** recorded in **Aosta Valley/Valle d'Aosta** to a **high of 112.2** in **Calabria**, a gap of nearly **20 points** that attests to the existence of two substantially different economic realities within the same country.

Once again, the worst positions in the ranking are occupied by the **Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions**: **Calabria (112.2), Sicily (108.0), Molise (106.8), Campania (106.4),** and **Abruzzo (105.8)**. In these regions, economic marginalization manifests through multiple simultaneous dimensions: **among the lowest disposable incomes** in Italy – with **Calabria** barely above **€14,900** per capita per year – **very high risk of poverty** exceeding **40%** in **Calabria** and reaching **38%** in **Sicily**, and **severe material and social deprivation** which, in Calabria's case, affects **more than one person in five (20.7%)**. The structural financial fragility of these areas is also

confirmed by banking loan data, with **Calabria** posting a **non-performing loan entry rate above 1.3%**, **triple** that of the most solid northern areas.

The **"medium–high"** exclusion band includes **Apulia/Puglia (104.4), Liguria (102.1), Basilicata (101.7), Lazio (101.5),** and **Sardinia (100.9)**. The presence of **Liguria** and **Lazio** shows that economic exclusion is **not exclusively a southern phenomenon**, but can also affect central-northern territories with particular vulnerabilities. **Liguria** displays specific criticalities across several indicators: difficulty making it to month's end, a heavy **expenditure-to-income** burden on households, a **high gender pay gap**, a significant share of families **forced to draw on savings** to get to month's end, and widespread difficulty **paying rent and mortgages**. **Lazio's** issues appear in important pockets of **poverty risk** (**over 21%** of the population), high **monthly expenses** relative to household income, **income distribution inequalities**, and, more generally, performance **worse than or close to** the national average across many indicators.

In the **"medium–low"** band are **Marche (99.5), Tuscany (99.0), Piedmont (98.5), Emilia–Romagna (98.4),** and **Umbria (96.4)**. **Emilia–Romagna**, traditionally among the country's most dynamic regions, shows some signs of vulnerability that place it in this intermediate band. While maintaining **among the highest average incomes** in Italy and containing **resource distribution inequalities**, there is **heightened perception** of deteriorating household economic conditions, **difficulty reaching month's end**, and **difficulty meeting mortgage payments**, with widespread **resort to accumulated savings**.

The **"low"** exclusion band gathers the **five economically strongest** regions nationally: **Veneto (95.9), Friuli–Venezia Giulia (95.7), Lombardy (94.3), Trentino-Alto Adige (94.3),** and **Aosta Valley/Valle d'Aosta (92.9)**. **Aosta Valley** stands out with the **lowest Index value**, benefiting especially from **above-average incomes**, **low incidence of low pensions** and **relative poverty**, and households' ability to **meet expenses without using savings** and to **sustain rent and mortgage payments**. **Trentino-Alto Adige** confirms its excellence with **disposable per-capita income exceeding €26,000 per year**, **poverty risk contained around 5%**, and widespread ability to manage **household budgets without difficulty**; however, this region posts the **highest gender pay gap**.

Dimensions of Inequality: Coefficient of Variation in the Economic Domain

Analysis of the **Coefficient of Variation (CV)** for economic indicators shows that this domain features **some of the sharpest territorial inequalities** in the entire country.

- The indicator with the **greatest territorial disparity** is **severe material and social deprivation** (**CV 109.7%**), revealing extremely high dispersion and symptomatic of an Italy split between territories where exclusion risk is **residual** and others where it affects **large segments of the population**. The gap between **Emilia–Romagna** (most virtuous at **0.9%**) and **Calabria** (**20.7%**) attests to **radically different living conditions** for millions of Italians.
- Other indicators also confirm high territorial variability, particularly those related to **household spending sustainability** and **individual poverty conditions**. **Difficulty paying mortgages** and **poverty risk** both post **CV 58.2%** (with **Aosta Valley** and **Trentino-Alto Adige** among the most virtuous, and **Molise** and **Calabria** most critical); **households struggling to make it to month's end** are **lowest in Trentino-Alto Adige** and **highest in Liguria** with **CV 57.7%**; **individual relative poverty** has **CV 54.7%** (**Aosta Valley 4.8%** vs **Calabria 32.2%**); and **difficulty paying rent** posts **CV 51.9%**. The **entry rate of**

household loans into non-performing status shows **CV 41.9%**, with **Trentino-Alto Adige** at the low end and **Calabria** at the opposite extreme; for **families needing to use savings** to reach month's end, **CV is 34.5%**, with **Molise** most critical and **Friuli–Venezia Giulia** best.

- **Household income indicators**, while showing more contained CVs (**18%** for **per-capita disposable income** and **15.7%** for **annual household income**), still confirm **significant territorial disparities**. **Trentino-Alto Adige** consistently records the **highest values**, while **Calabria** occupies the **last position**, highlighting a **structural income-generation gap** between North and South.
- Of particular interest is **perceived worsening of household economic conditions**, with **CV 14%** and an **unexpected geography**: **Basilicata** posts the **best performance**, while **Emilia–Romagna** – traditionally dynamic – shows the **most critical situation**, indicating that even in economically advanced contexts there can be **strains** linked to **rising living costs** and difficulties adapting to **new consumption patterns**.
- **Gender pay gap**, the **expenditure-to-income ratio**, and the **Gini coefficient** are the **least variable** dimensions territorially, with **CVs between 8.8% and 7.7%**. This does **not** necessarily imply greater equity; rather, it indicates a **homogeneous spread** of **gender inequalities**, **income concentration**, and **inflationary pressure on household incomes** – forms of **cross-cutting exclusion** that **span the entire national territory**.

Analysis of Indicators in the Economic Domain

Analysis of the **16 indicators** in the **Economic Exclusion Index** outlines a complex configuration of territorial imbalances that permeate every aspect of **material well-being** – from **income generation** to **household budget management strategies**, from **protection against indigence** to **inclusion in the credit and financial system**. The dominant territorial pattern is again a clear **North–South polarization** that goes **beyond quantitative income measures**, extending to the **structural living conditions** of households, their **capacity for economic resilience**, and their **prospects for social mobility**.

The regions of the **Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions** simultaneously feature **low levels of disposable income**, **high incidence of relative and absolute poverty**, **significant exposure to severe material and social deprivation**, and **difficulties in managing credit situations**. **Calabria, Sicily,** and **Campania** emerge as the most penalized areas, with situations that in some cases amount to **true social emergencies**. In these regions, **over one-third of the population** is at risk of poverty, while **severe material and social deprivation** reaches levels far **exceeding** those recorded in the country's most virtuous areas.

The **sustainability of household spending** dimension proves particularly critical. In the **Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions**, a significant share of families **struggle to pay mortgages and rents**, are **forced to draw on savings** to cover current expenses, and show **high entry rates into loan distress** with the banking system. By contrast, **North-Eastern and North-Western** regions excel across most economic indicators, forming territorial ecosystems capable of **producing and redistributing wealth** more **equitably and efficiently**. **Aosta Valley, Trentino–Alto Adige, Lombardy,** and **Friuli–Venezia Giulia** stand out for **high disposable incomes**, **low poverty incidence**, a strong **ability to manage budgets without using savings**, and **limited exposure** to financial exclusion risk. Central peninsular areas occupy an **intermediate band**, generally above national parameters but marked by **specific vulnerabilities**.

The **gender pay gap** dimension is **cross-cutting**, with disparities occurring **relatively uniformly** nationwide, showing that **gender-based economic discrimination** is a **structural problem** in Italy's economic system that **transcends territorial specificities**.

Analysis of the **perception of worsening household economic conditions** reveals **complex dynamics** that do not necessarily follow the traditional geography of inequality. Even in the **economically strongest territories**, there are worrying signs linked to **rising living costs**, **job precariousness**, and **difficulty maintaining traditional living standards**.

The **high banking distress rates** recorded in the **Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions** reflect **not only** greater economic hardship among households but also **structural limitations** in **access to financial services** and in the **ability to obtain favorable terms** for mortgages and loans.

Overall, the analysis highlights a **penalized Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions** showing **high vulnerability** across almost all dimensions examined. In many southern regions, the combination of **low income levels**, **high financial precariousness**, and **greater exposure to unsustainable housing costs** creates a **system of exclusion** that is **not merely resource scarcity**, but directly impacts the **very possibility of leading a dignified and secure life**.

The **urgency of integrated policies** that **simultaneously** address **income**, **access to services**, **housing affordability**, and **financial inclusion** emerges clearly from the analysis, framing **economic exclusion** as **one of the most pressing challenges** to realizing the **substantive equality** enshrined in the Italian Constitution.

4. Social Exclusion Index

The **social** domain of the Index measures citizens' inclusion in collective, political, and cultural life, considering factors such as civic participation, access to entertainment and sports, use of cultural services, women's political representation, basic digital skills, and public spending on social protection. These dimensions reflect not only a territory's ability to guarantee material rights but also to build community bonds and provide opportunities for personal development. This domain is grounded in numerous articles of the Italian Constitution that underscore the centrality of social cohesion in building the Republic. **Article 3** tasks the State with "removing economic and social obstacles that […] prevent the full development of the human person"; **Article 29** recognizes the family as a "natural society" to be protected, and **Article 31** commits the Republic to "protecting motherhood, childhood, and youth," promoting participation and care of social ties with appropriate tools. **Article 37** calls for reconciling women's work with family life, centering the right of women to perform an "essential family function" under conditions of equity and protection. The principle of equal dignity and participation is further supported by **Article 38**, which guarantees "the right to maintenance and social assistance" for all citizens without the necessary means, and by **Article 51**, which establishes equal access "to public offices and elective positions," with explicit reference to equality between men and women in political representation.

Social exclusion does not manifest merely through the absence of income or job opportunities; it takes complex forms that include relational isolation, digital disconnection, shortage of cultural and sports opportunities, underrepresentation in democratic institutions, lack of social spaces, and fragile community bonds.

The **Social Exclusion Index** is built by aggregating **19 indicators** measuring three broad dimensions: the public system's capacity to ensure protection and access (e.g., spending on social protection or availability of digital infrastructure), the quality of relational and civic participation (volunteering, women's political representation, cultural participation), and accessibility to opportunities for social and sporting life.

The results show a strongly differentiated territorial picture that confirms – and in some respects amplifies – the disparities seen in the domains analyzed earlier. With values ranging from **90.0** in **Trentino-Alto Adige** to **114.4** in **Calabria**, the gap of over **24 points** highlights how access to opportunities for social, cultural, and civic participation is unevenly distributed across the country.

The most critical situation again appears in the **southern regions**, which entirely occupy the **"high" exclusion** band: **Calabria (114.4), Basilicata (110.3), Campania (109.7), Sicily (109.4),** and **Molise (108.0)**. Here, social exclusion manifests through multiple simultaneous dimensions: **low digital skills** – in **Calabria** affecting about **60%** of the population – lower access to the internet and ICT, **shortage of leisure and sports infrastructure** – with **Basilicata** showing the **lowest density of sports clubs** nationally – and **weaker civic and political participation**. Marginality is further heightened by **insufficient female representation** in local institutions and the **lower prevalence of organized volunteering**.

The **"medium–high"** exclusion band includes **Apulia/Puglia (106.5), Sardinia (103.2), Abruzzo (101.4), Umbria (99.3),** and **Liguria (98.9)**. In **Liguria**, the demographic profile marked by a **high share of older residents** may affect lower social and digital participation, while **Umbria** – with a strong rural component and small-to-mid-sized towns – suffers from a more limited offering of group activities, especially in sports.

In the **"medium–low"** band are **Piedmont (98.2), Lazio (97.2), Marche (96.8), Tuscany (96.3),** and **Aosta Valley/Valle d'Aosta (95.1)**. Although these territories show some weaknesses, they are **better** at ensuring opportunities for social participation: wider **basic digital skills**, together with **higher participation** in cultural and sports activities, help create a more **inclusive and cohesive** social fabric.

The **"low"** exclusion band comprises **Lombardy (94.4), Friuli–Venezia Giulia (94.0), Emilia–Romagna (93.9), Veneto (93.4),** and **Trentino-Alto Adige (90.0)**. **Trentino-Alto Adige** stands out with the **lowest Index value**, showing excellent performance on most indicators: among the **highest per-capita public spending on social protection** in Italy, **more than half** the population with **at least basic digital skills**, **high rates of social and civic participation**, and widespread **volunteering** and **sports practice**.

Dimensions of Inequality: Coefficient of Variation in the Social Domain

Examining regional dispersion of social indicators via the **Coefficient of Variation (CV)** again reveals stark unevenness in access to relational, cultural, and civic resources that make effective citizenship possible.

- The indicator with the **greatest territorial variability** is the **share of residents in municipalities with no offer of entertainment, culture, or sports**, with **CV 141.8%**. This reveals a dramatic split between territories where access to social gathering opportunities is

assured and others where a **majority** live in places **totally lacking** organized leisure, sports, and cultural offerings. **Emilia–Romagna** and **Tuscany** perform best, with **no population** in this condition, while **Calabria** is most critical, with **over one in ten** residents living in municipalities without any organized entertainment offer.

- **Demand for entertainment in inland areas** shows **CV 63%** – **Aosta Valley** posts the best values, while **Calabria** remains critical; **density of sports clubs** has **CV 49.7%**, with **Lombardy** benefiting from the most extensive sports infrastructure and **Basilicata** the lowest.
- **Women's political representation** at the local level is particularly significant, with **CV 45.4%**: **Lazio** stands out positively with **over 40%** women elected to regional councils, while **Basilicata** is lowest at **4.8%**, underscoring how gender parity in political representation remains a distant goal, especially in some areas.
- **Overall demand for entertainment** shows **CV 38.8%** (best in **Emilia–Romagna**, worst in **Molise**), while **severe housing deprivation** has **CV 37.8%** (best **Basilicata**, worst **Sardinia**). **Per-capita spending on social protection** shows **CV 36.6%**, with **Aosta Valley** enjoying the highest public social investment and **Calabria** the lowest, indicating significant differences in the public system's capacity to provide support and social protection.
- Other indicators show notable disparities: **sedentariness (CV 33.8%)** with **Trentino-Alto Adige** best and **Basilicata** worst; **volunteering (CV 31.3%)** highest in **Trentino–Alto Adige**, lowest in **Sicily**; **share of women mayors (CV 29.1%)** highest in **Emilia–Romagna**, lowest in **Campania**.
- **Abstention from cultural entertainment** shows **CV 26.7%**, with **Trentino-Alto Adige** registering the **lowest** excluded share and **Basilicata** the **highest**, while **sports participation (CV 22.1%)** again places **Trentino-Alto Adige** at the top and **Calabria** at the bottom.
- For **basic digital skills (CV 15.4%)** and **traditional social participation (CV 14.7%)**, disparities are smaller but still meaningful, with **Lombardy** and **Trentino-Alto Adige** favorable, **Calabria** and **Sicily** lagging. Interestingly, **online political participation (CV 12.4%)** shows an **inversion**: **Campania** leads while **Lombardy** trails, whereas **traditional civic and political participation (CV 11.3%)** again sees **Calabria** last – suggesting that **digital activism** may partly compensate for some forms of traditional exclusion.
- The **least variable** indicators concern **regular internet use (CV 5.1%)** and **availability of home IT tools and connectivity (CV 8.6%)**, pointing to gradual alignment in access to **basic digital infrastructure**, though qualitative gaps in **effective use** persist.

Analysis of Indicators in the Social Domain

Three major fault lines emerge from the 19 indicators. **First, geography**, opposing **Center–North** and **Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions**: the South concentrates worse values in almost every dimension – from digital skills to civic participation, from cultural use to sports practice. **Second, urban vs. inland areas**, which also affects Center–North territories: peripheral centers have **less access** to cultural activities, sports, and social life. **Third, population density**, contrasting densely populated territories with low-density ones where **service scarcity** limits participation opportunities.

Calabria, Basilicata, and **Campania** are the most penalized regions, ranking last across most indicators. In these areas, **fewer than 40%** of people have **basic digital skills**, **social and civic participation** is minimal, and **women's representation** in local institutions is below average – especially among **mayors**. Public **social protection spending** is below the national average, while **volunteering** and **sports practice** post the country's **lowest** values.

In contrast, **North-Eastern** and **North-Western** regions excel across most indicators, forming **dynamic, inclusive social systems** that generate **territorial cohesion**. **Trentino–Alto Adige, Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia–Romagna,** and **Friuli–Venezia Giulia** stand out for **robust social protection**, **widespread digital skills**, **significant participation** in cultural and sports activities, and **greater inclusion of women** in political representation. Here, the **density of sports clubs** is above average, **volunteering** reaches **excellence**, and the **supply of entertainment and culture** is widely distributed.

Central Italy occupies an **intermediate** position – generally above national averages with **sectoral weaknesses** that do not undermine overall territorial cohesion.

Particularly critical is **cultural and sports participation** in southern regions, where the mix of **infrastructure shortages**, **limited public provision**, and **lower household spending capacity** creates a **vicious circle** of exclusion from opportunities for personal enrichment and socialization. This is not merely lack of leisure; it **obstructs capability development** and the building of **positive relational networks**.

The **digital divide** is especially relevant, creating **new forms of exclusion** that will become increasingly penalizing as access to **essential services** and **participation opportunities** moves onto **technological platforms**. In some southern regions, **over half** the population lacks adequate digital skills, risking amplification of other forms of social exclusion.

Women's political representation further reveals a **persistent gender gap** nationwide, **sharper** in the South. **Volunteering** also exhibits significant territorial disparities, with the **North-East** showing a strong civic-participation tradition and the **South** systematically lower values.

Overall, the social domain confirms a **structural dualism** in Italy's social system, with territories featuring **good social inclusion** levels coexisting with areas where **exclusion is severe**. This calls for **integrated public policies** that **simultaneously** address **social protection**, **digital access**, **cultural and sports provision**, **democratic representation**, and **active citizenship**.

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5. Exclusion from Services for Citizens and Families

Equal and universal access to public services is fundamental to realizing social rights, enabling full citizen participation in collective life, and overcoming territorial inequalities. In this domain, the Exclusion Index measures the **availability, accessibility, and quality** of an articulated set of services for citizens and families: from **mobility** and **administrative digitization** to **early childhood socio-educational services**, **waste collection**, **distribution networks**, **urban safety**, **public lighting**, **infrastructure availability**, and **user satisfaction**.

Numerous constitutional provisions establish the State's and local entities' obligation to guarantee such services **widely and equitably**. **Article 3** requires the Republic to remove obstacles that **de facto** limit equality – among which the **absence of essential services** is a direct form of exclusion. **Article 37** protects working women, ensuring conditions that enable their **"essential family function"**; **Article 38** recognizes the **right to social assistance** for those in need; **Article 31** commits the State to **"protecting childhood"** through appropriate measures and institutions, including **early education and care**. **Article 4** recalls the **right to work**, closely tied to **transport efficiency** and **accessibility of production sites**, while **Article 29** protects the family as the foundational social unit,

to be supported through targeted services. Added to these are the principles introduced by the **constitutional law of 7 November 2022**, which amended **Article 119** to enshrine **equalization and territorial equity** in service delivery, protecting civil and social rights "**throughout the national territory**."

Exclusion from services rarely appears as an **explicit denial** of a right; rather, it takes the form of **silent erosion**: services that exist **on paper** but are **too distant**, **unreliable**, **poorly distributed**, **understaffed**, or **technologically inadequate**.

The **Services Exclusion Index** aggregates **28 indicators** measuring: **proximity services** (pharmacies, post offices, law enforcement), **utilities** (electricity, waste collection, water), **public transport and mobility**, **digital public services**, and **early childhood and social-care services** for vulnerable groups.

Values range from **92.4** in **Trentino-Alto Adige** to **111.9** in **Campania**, a gap of over **19 points** that again highlights unequal access to essential services nationwide.

The **"high"** exclusion band includes **Campania (111.9), Calabria (110.3), Sicily (108.3), Apulia/Puglia (104.9),** and **Lazio (104.4)** – the **only Central** region in the most critical zone – showing how a **large metropolis** can coexist with **significant territorial service gaps**. Here, the main criticalities concentrate: **irregular water distribution** – in **Calabria** affecting **over 38%** of households – **shortfalls** in local public transport supply, **limited early childhood services**, and **greater difficulty** accessing **digital public administration** services.

The **"medium–high"** band comprises **Basilicata (103.7), Liguria (101.7), Molise (101.4), Abruzzo (101.3),** and **Sardinia (100.1)**, while the **"medium–low"** band includes **Piedmont (99.2), Umbria (98.8), Veneto (98.6), Tuscany (98.5),** and **Marche (97.1)** – territories that, overall, better guarantee adequate services to citizens, albeit with **sectoral weaknesses**.

The **"low"** exclusion band brings together the most virtuous regions: **Lombardy (96.1), Emilia–Romagna (95.6), Friuli–Venezia Giulia (95.1), Aosta Valley/Valle d'Aosta (94.9),** and **Trentino-Alto Adige (92.4)**. **Trentino-Alto Adige** excels on most indicators: **high digital-service coverage**, **efficient water and electricity distribution**, **strong early-childhood provision**, and **quality public transport**.

Dimensions of Inequality: Coefficient of Variation in the Services Domain

The territorial variability of indicators shows how the **availability** and **quality** of essential public services depend heavily on the **region of residence**.

- The most uneven indicator is **irregularity in water distribution (CV 99.5%)**, signaling severe criticalities in the **Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions**, especially **Calabria**, versus regions like **Veneto**, where service continuity is nearly guaranteed. **Local public transport** also shows **very high variability (CV 74.4%)**, with **Lombardy** offering far greater capacity than **Molise**.
- Other fundamentals show significant inequalities: **electricity quality (CV 51.0%) – Aosta Valley** virtuous, **Campania** critical; **public nursery places (CV 48.2%) – Aosta Valley** top, **Calabria** bottom; **effective use of municipal services for early childhood (CV 47.5%)**; and

beds for social protection (CV 43.0%) – **Trentino-Alto Adige** excellent, **Campania** penalized.

- Urban quality – **perceived or actual** – also varies: **parking difficulty (CV 42.8%)** – **Umbria** best, **Liguria** worst; **accessibility of online public services (CV 42%)** – **Veneto** leads, **Molise** last; **public transport use (CV 34.8%)** and **satisfaction (CV 31.9%)** – **North** consistently outperforms **South**.
- The urban infrastructure context reveals **uneven local investment**: **poor street lighting (CV 31.2%)** – **Trentino-Alto Adige** best, **Lazio** critical; **road-network condition (CV 29.2%)** – again **Trentino-Alto Adige** best, **Umbria** worst. **Public spending on cultural, recreational, and worship activities (CV 29.1%)** confirms **different budget priorities**, with **Trentino-Alto Adige** investing more and **Calabria** less.
- **Access times** also differ: **students taking over 31 minutes** to reach school (**CV 29.3%**) penalizes **Friuli–Venezia Giulia** and favors **Sicily**, while for **workers (CV 30.1%) Lazio** is most penalized and **Marche** best.
- **Digital services** have smaller yet non-trivial dispersion: **public Wi-Fi (CV 23.3%)**, **ultrafast coverage (20.4%)**, **online PA interaction (12.5%)**. Access to **essential services** (pharmacies, ERs, post offices, police, municipal offices) generally shows **CVs below 25%**, with **distance to the ER** having the **lowest variability (11.6%)**, likely due to tighter national regulation of emergency-facility distribution.

Analysis of Indicators in the Services Domain

The 28 indicators depict a **complex** picture where exclusion from services takes **multiple, mutually reinforcing** forms. The territorial pattern confirms the **North–South polarization**, but important **specificities** emerge, showing that access depends on **administrative capacity**, **infrastructure investment**, and **morphological/demographic** features.

Southern regions show **simultaneous** criticalities in **basic services** (water, electricity), **public transport shortfalls**, **limited early-childhood provision**, and **greater barriers** to **digital public services**. **Campania, Calabria,** and **Sicily** are most penalized: in **Calabria**, **over 38%** of households face **irregular water supply**; **Molise** offers the **country's most limited** public transport at **402 seat-km**; **public nurseries** are systematically below national standards.

Water and electricity services are particularly critical: interruptions and irregularities amount to **structural emergencies**. **Calabria** and **Sicily** show **severe water-supply issues**, while **Campania** records the **worst electricity irregularities**, revealing infrastructure deficits that undermine **daily quality of life**.

Northern regions provide **more extensive, efficient** services. **Trentino-Alto Adige** and **Aosta Valley** excel on most indicators, while **Lombardy** leads in **public transport supply** with **over 11,000 seat-km per inhabitant**, more than **28× Molise**.

Service digitization looks more balanced yet reveals persistent gaps. While **ultrafast broadband** and **public Wi-Fi** have spread, **effective access** to online services and **digital interaction** with the PA still show **divides** between more and less **administratively advanced** territories.

Early-childhood services are particularly critical, with marked regional differences in **public nursery availability** and **actual use** of municipal services. **Aosta Valley** and **Friuli–Venezia Giulia**

perform best, while **Calabria** is most critical – evidence that **support to families** strongly depends on **place of residence**.

Lazio merits special attention: despite being a **central region with significant resources**, it falls into the **high-exclusion** band, showing how **urban concentration** and **metropolitan management challenges** can produce **widespread territorial service gaps**.

Overall, **access to essential services** remains a **major source of disparity** across Italy. Exclusion from services **amplifies other marginalities**: territories with **lower social participation** and **greater economic difficulty** often also show **service shortfalls**, creating **vicious circles** of exclusion. **Digitization**, while promising, risks generating **new exclusions** unless paired with **digital-inclusion policies** and **skills strengthening**.

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6. Exclusion from the Right to Health

Exclusion from the **right to health** is among the gravest inequalities because it directly affects people's **quality** and **expectation** of life, shaping their ability to fully realize themselves in every sphere. The Italian Constitution recognizes this fundamental right in **Article 32**, which states: "The Republic protects health as a fundamental right of the individual and in the interest of the community, and guarantees free care to the indigent." Health – understood not merely as absence of disease but as overall **physical, psychological, and social well-being** – has a dual value: an **inalienable individual right** and a **collective interest** whose protection is necessary for general well-being and social cohesion.

This principle underpins the **National Health Service (SSN)**, established by **Law 833/1978**, which made access to care universal based on **equity**, **solidarity**, and **substantive equality**.

Health exclusion does not only appear as **denied access** to care; it also includes **inadequate facilities and staffing**, **economic barriers** to services not covered publicly, **health emigration** to other regions, **forgoing care** for financial or organizational reasons, and **dissatisfaction** with the quality of assistance received.

The **Health** domain comprises **23 indicators** measuring: the **structural and organizational adequacy** of the health system (physicians, beds, equipment); **effective access** (foregone care, hospital out-migration, economic difficulties); **population health status** (healthy life expectancy, avoidable mortality, chronic conditions); and **subjective indicators** (trust in the health system, satisfaction with care).

Index values range from **94.4** in **Trentino-Alto Adige** to **109.9** in **Calabria**. The **"high"** exclusion band includes, besides **Calabria**, **Campania (108.8), Sardinia (106.5), Apulia/Puglia (104.2),** and **Sicily (103.4)**. Here, the right to health is compromised by **structural**, **organizational**, and **relational** factors: **Calabria** has the **lowest hospital-bed availability** (**24.6 per 10,000** residents vs a **32.7** national average) and **biomedical equipment** (**1.98 per 1,000** residents vs **3.46** average); **healthy life expectancy** is **53.1 years** vs **66.2** in **Trentino–Alto Adige**; and it performs **below average** on virtually all indicators.

The **"medium-high"** band includes **Basilicata (103.1), Piedmont (101.7), Marche (101.5), Lazio (101.2),** and **Molise (100.7)** – a heterogeneous group showing that health exclusion is **not** solely a

southern issue. **Molise** excels in **home care for the elderly** (**5.5%** vs **3.3%** average) but also posts the **highest hospital out-migration**.

In the **"medium-low"** band are **Umbria (100.3), Abruzzo (99.1), Lombardy (99.1), Friuli – Venezia Giulia (99.1),** and **Aosta Valley/Valle d'Aosta (98.5)** – with **Abruzzo** the **only** Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions region outside the critical bands. The **lowest** exclusion levels are found in **Veneto (97.7), Liguria (96.2), Emilia–Romagna (95.5), Tuscany (95.4),** and **Trentino-Alto Adige (94.4)**. **Trentino-Alto Adige** consistently performs best: **highest healthy life expectancy**, **lowest avoidable mortality (15.1% vs 25% in Campania)**, and **highest satisfaction** with care received.

Dimensions of Inequality: Coefficient of Variation in the Health Domain

The health domain has the **lowest average CV (22%)** among all domains, suggesting relative homogeneity in guaranteeing the right to health; nevertheless, the disparities observed have **particularly severe consequences**.

- The most variable indicator is **hospital out-migration to another region (CV 63.1%)**, one of the most extreme manifestations of SSN asymmetry. **Lombardy**'s self-sufficiency limits the phenomenon, while in **Molise** there is a true **"flight for health,"** with **about one in three** patients seeking care elsewhere.
- Disparities are also significant in **difficulty paying medical expenses (CV 45.8%)** – **Aosta Valley** is almost unaffected, while **Marche** is most critical (**45.8%**) – and in **trust in the health system (CV 41.2%)** – **Friuli–Venezia Giulia** best, **Apulia/Puglia** lowest.
- High-dispersion indicators include **home care for the elderly (CV 36.6%)** – **Molise** positive – **GPs with caseloads above thresholds (CV 34.1%)** – **Sicily** favorable, **Lombardy** critical – and **satisfaction** with **medical (CV 31.4%)** and **nursing care (CV 32.6%)** during hospitalization – **Trentino-Alto Adige** leading, **Calabria** last.
- Smaller disparities appear for **adequate nutrition (CV 29.1%)** and **foregone medical services (CV 26.9%)**, while many parameters fall in the **15–21%** range: populations with severe limitations, high-assistance specialty beds, diagnostic equipment availability, multi-morbidity and severe limitations – almost always confirming the **North–South** divide.
- The **most homogeneous** indicators (CV < 15%) include **medical specialists (14%)** – **Lazio** and **Basilicata** at the extremes – **avoidable mortality (12.9%)** – with **Trentino-Alto Adige** and **Campania** as poles – and **health personnel**, again contrasting **virtuous Molise** and **struggling Calabria**. Even the more stable parameters – **cancer mortality (10%)**, **per-capita health spending (6.3%)**, and the **mental-health index (2%)** – see **Trentino-Alto Adige** systematically first, **Calabria/Campania** alternating at the bottom – evidence of **non-trivial disparities** on fundamentals.

Analysis of Indicators in the Health Domain

The 23 indicators map health exclusion **not strictly along** traditional North–South lines. While **southern regions** fall in the **high-exclusion** band on **outcome** indicators, **structural supply** and **economic access** follow **more heterogeneous** patterns.

Southern regions combine **worse population health**, **lower satisfaction**, **structural shortages**, and **greater access barriers**. **Calabria** is most penalized: beyond **fewer beds** and **staff**, it records the **lowest healthy life expectancy (53.1 years)**, **very low user satisfaction**, and **below-average** performance on almost all indicators.

Health emigration is especially critical: in **Molise** and **Basilicata**, about **one in three** patients must seek care in other regions, with heavy **economic, social, and psychological** costs – an evident form of **territorial exclusion** from the right to health.

Northern regions show **better population health**, **higher satisfaction**, and **more self-sufficient** systems. **Trentino-Alto Adige** again excels: **highest healthy life expectancy (66.2 years)**, **lowest avoidable mortality**, **lowest cancer mortality**, **highest satisfaction** with medical and nursing care (**over 60% very satisfied**), **low multi-morbidity**, **low severe limitations**, and **low foregone care** – though it underperforms on some indicators (e.g., **hospital out-migration**, **GP/pediatrician/specialist** supply).

Economic barriers to care are a **cross-cutting concern**: the share of households reporting **difficulty paying medical expenses** ranges from **1%** in **Aosta Valley** to **45.8%** in **Marche**, showing that despite formal universality of the SSN, **effective access** is still **income-conditioned** in many areas.

Mental health, the indicator with the **lowest CV (2.0%)**, still shows a meaningful gap between **Trentino-Alto Adige (72.5 points)** and **Campania (66.8)**, reflecting socio-economic differences and **access** to psychological support services.

Structural indicators are mixed: while some southern regions show **evident shortages** in beds and equipment, **Molise** excels in specific services such as **home care** and **health-personnel** levels.

The **subjective** experience is most worrying: nationally, **only ~40%** of patients report being **satisfied** with care, and **over one-third** express **low trust** in the system – signals of a **legitimacy crisis** that could undermine service effectiveness.

Overall, while the right to health is **formally guaranteed**, its **practical implementation** exhibits **non-negligible territorial disparities**. The **13-year gap** in **healthy life expectancy** between **Calabria** and **Trentino-Alto Adige** starkly illustrates health exclusion: a person in **Calabria** can expect **significantly fewer years** of psycho-physical well-being than a fellow citizen in **South Tyrol**, one of the gravest inequalities in access to fundamental rights.

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7. Exclusion from Education and Knowledge

The **right to education** is a key instrument for ensuring **equal opportunities** and **social mobility**. The Constitution pays special attention to this right: **Article 34** states that "**schools are open to all**" and guarantees that the "**capable and deserving, even if without means,** have the right to attain the **highest levels** of study," while **Article 9** commits the Republic to promoting "**cultural development** and **scientific and technical research**." **Article 38** completes the framework by guaranteeing the right to **education** for citizens with **disabilities** or disadvantages.

Education and knowledge is one of the domains where the **principle of substantive equality (Art. 3)** translates most concretely. Educational exclusion is not limited to **illiteracy** or **dropout**; it includes

inadequate skills, **school dispersion**, **NEET status**, **limited lifelong learning**, **infrastructure shortfalls**, **gender disparities**, **low cultural participation**, and **declining trust** in educational institutions.

The **Education and Knowledge Exclusion Index** consists of **23 indicators** covering the entire **educational and cultural** pathway: from **pre-school participation (ages 4–5)** to **tertiary education**, via **basic skills**, **school–university transition**, **conditions for people with disabilities**, **university infrastructure**, **public spending** on education and culture, and **trust** in educational institutions.

The results confirm that Italy's **educational inequalities** reflect **deeply rooted territorial imbalances**, with values ranging from **95.3** in **Marche** to **109.9** in **Sicily** – a gap of over **14 points**.

The **"high"** exclusion band is made up entirely of **southern and island regions**: **Sicily (109.9), Campania (108.6), Apulia/Puglia (104.6), Calabria (104.1),** and **Sardinia (103.6)**. The most acute issues cluster here: in **Sicily**, **27.9%** of young people are **NEET** (over **1 in 4**), **early school leaving** reaches **17.1%**, **inadequate literacy** affects **52.3%** of students, and **inadequate numeracy 66.3%**.

The **"medium–high"** band includes **Molise (103.0), Piedmont (101.5), Veneto (101.5), Abruzzo (100.7),** and **Lazio (99.7)**. The presence of **Center–North** regions here is unexpected, indicating that educational exclusion is shaped not only by **economic factors** but also by **policy choices** on inclusion and equity.

In the **"medium–low"** band are **Liguria (99.6), Basilicata (99.5), Trentino-Alto Adige (99.1), Emilia–Romagna (99.1),** and **Tuscany (98.4)**. **Trentino–Alto Adige's** placement here is **surprising**: despite excellence on many specific indicators (**per-capita spending on education and culture**, **lowest NEET in Italy at 8.8%**, **out-of-home cultural participation** and **library use**), it shows **overall** a **medium-low** exclusion level due to **weak female participation in STEM** and **shortfalls** in **disability inclusion plans** in schools.

The **"low"** exclusion band gathers **Lombardy (98.3), Friuli–Venezia Giulia (97.7), Umbria (96.1), Aosta Valley/Valle d'Aosta (96.0),** and **Marche (95.3)**. **Marche** is notable for **low dropout**, **solid literacy and numeracy**, **high trust** in the education system (schools and universities), and **good university-student infrastructure**.

Dimensions of Inequality: Coefficient of Variation in Education and Knowledge

This domain has an **average CV of 31.6%**, mid-range among domains, with **extreme disparities** on specific indicators.

- The sharpest disparities concern the **right to university study**: **beds for out-of-town students** have the **highest CV (75%)**, showing an extreme gap between **Trentino-Alto Adige** (adequate support infrastructure) and **Molise** (significant structural shortages). A similar issue emerges for **university canteen places (CV 71.6%)**, with the same regions leading and lagging – confirming that **student-support infrastructure** is one of the **country's most unequal** areas.
- Other indicators with **CV > 50%** span **school planning** to **cultural participation**: **schools without an annual inclusion plan (66.7%)**, **low trust in universities (61.7%)**, **municipal spending on culture (58.3%)**, and **library use (54.2%)**. These reveal that beyond structural

inequalities there are **marked differences** in territories' capacity to **design and promote inclusion and culture**, resulting in highly varied **use** and **trust** in educational institutions.

- The **gender gap among STEM graduates (CV 43.6%)** is especially telling: disparities vary widely by region – **Sardinia** and **Calabria** show the **smallest gaps**, **Trentino-Alto Adige** the **largest** – reflecting **cultural factors**, **program offerings**, and **school guidance** capacity. **NEET youth (CV 41.5%)** confirm a well-known territorial polarization – **Trentino-Alto Adige** favorable, **Sicily** most critical – while **low trust in schools (CV 39.1%)** is **lowest** in **Basilicata** and **highest** in **Veneto**; **early school leaving (CV 33.4%)** sees **Umbria** most virtuous and **Sardinia** most problematic.
- With **moderate variability (15–30%)** sit indicators near **~21%**: **school accessibility for students with disabilities (21.6%)** – **Aosta Valley** best, **Liguria** worst – **adult lifelong learning (22.4%)**, and **inadequate numeracy (21.1%)** – **Veneto** best, **Sicily** worst. Smaller disparities are seen for **non-employed in training (17.2%)**, **out-of-home cultural participation (16.3%)**, and **public spending on education (16.1%)** – all dominated by **northern** regions, with the **South** often critical.
- With **low variability (< 15%)** are **inadequate literacy (14.8%)** – more homogeneous than numeracy – **tertiary-education attainment (13.5%)**, and **school-to-university transition**, where **Abruzzo** surprisingly **leads** and **Trentino-Alto Adige** is **last**. The most homogeneous indicators reflect central guidance that has yielded convergence: **upper-secondary diploma (9.6%)**, **IT stations for inclusion (8.9%)**, **average class size (7%)**, and **pre-school participation ages 4–5 (2.2%)** – showing that **organizational standardization** can reduce disparities, though not necessarily **ensure quality**. On these, **southern** and **central-northern** regions **alternate** at the top and bottom, breaking the classic North–South pattern.

Analysis of Indicators in the Education and Knowledge Domain

The 23 indicators outline an **extraordinarily complex** map of educational exclusion that **challenges** established narratives about Italy's territorial divides. While southern regions consistently fall into the **most critical** bands for **outcome** indicators – especially **literacy and numeracy**, **dropout**, and **NEETs** – the **investment**, **participation**, and **trust** indicators follow **more intricate** territorial logics, with **unexpected excellence** in the **Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions** and **surprising weaknesses** in parts of the **Center–North**. **Liguria**, for example, ranks **last** for **per-capita education spending (€1,029)**, while **Campania** and **Calabria exceed** the national average; yet these same regions record **minimal municipal cultural investment**, and across the **Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions** (excluding **Sardinia**) the value is **below €11 per capita**; conversely, **Trentino-Alto Adige** excels in **both** education and culture spending.

Basic skills reveal worrying fractures: in **literacy**, nearly **4 in 10** students (**39.9%**) fail to reach the minimum level – **Sicily 52.3%**, **Umbria 30.4%**. **Numeracy** is worse: national average **44%**, peaking in **Sicily (62.3%)** and **Calabria (61.1%)**, while **Veneto** performs best (**33.5%**). These shortfalls are **structural obstacles** to further study, **qualified employment**, and **informed democratic participation**.

The **gender gap in STEM** degrees varies widely: **Sardinia** and **Calabria** show the **smallest gap (9.2%)**, **Trentino-Alto Adige** the **largest (51.8%)**. This indicates that gender disparities in technical-scientific fields are not merely national (**31.9%** on average) but **strongly regional**, influenced by **culture**, **program mix**, and **school guidance**.

Inclusion of students with disabilities shows diffuse weaknesses: **school accessibility** ranges from **Aosta Valley best (73.7%)** to **Liguria worst (28.7%)**, with a national average of **40.3%** – meaning **over half** of school buildings are **not fully accessible**. Even more worrying, **schools without an annual inclusion plan** range from **Aosta Valley virtuous (1.9%)** to **Trentino-Alto Adige critical (17.8%)**, signaling **planning gaps** in school integration; **IT stations for inclusion** see **Emilia–Romagna** best and **Aosta Valley** worst.

Student welfare shortfalls are perhaps the most emblematic indicator of unequal guarantees of the **right to study**: with **only 4.47 beds per 100 out-of-town students** and **2.9 canteen places per 100 students** at state universities, Italy's support system is **dramatically undersized**. In regions like **Molise**, the **total absence** of **university housing and canteens** turns access to higher education into a **class privilege**, directly contradicting the constitutional principle that the "capable and deserving" have the right to **reach the highest levels of study "even if without means."**

Early school leaving confirms the gravity of youth exclusion: national average **10.4%**; **Sardinia (17.3%)** and **Sicily (17.1%)** exceed it by **60%+**, signaling a **true educational emergency**. **Umbria** is most virtuous (**5.6%**), less than **one-third** of **Sardinia**'s rate.

School-to-university transition yields surprising results: **Abruzzo leads (60.9%)**, while **Trentino-Alto Adige** is **last (37.9%)**, suggesting **different territorial models** between academic continuation and **post-diploma alternatives**. Likewise, **pre-school participation (ages 4–5)** sees **Campania** at the top (**98.3%**) and **Lazio** most critical (**88.9%**), followed by **Lombardy, Emilia–Romagna,** and **Veneto**, **reversing** entrenched expectations.

Trust in educational institutions reveals further complexity: for **schools**, **Basilicata** shows **highest trust** (**12.7% low trust**) while **Veneto** is most critical (**34.3%**). For **universities**, **Aosta Valley** and **Basilicata** show **higher trust**, while **Molise** is **lowest**.

Overall, Italy's education system displays **deep contradictions**, showing that determinants of educational exclusion are **complex** and not reducible to **economic parameters** alone. **Regional education policies**, **local educational traditions**, **public investment**, and **territorial socio-cultural dynamics** play decisive roles, creating an **educational geography** that **defies expectations** and demands **more nuanced, targeted** intervention strategies.

8. Exclusion from Cross-Cutting Rights

Cross-cutting rights represent the fundamental dimension of citizenship that underlies and conditions the exercise of all other constitutional rights. Unlike the previously analyzed domains – which focus on specific aspects of social life such as work, economy, services, health, and education – cross-cutting rights form the **material and immaterial infrastructure** that enables a **dignified and secure life** for all citizens, regardless of where they live.

The **environment**, **security**, and the **proper functioning of institutions** are not merely "additional services" provided by the State, but **essential preconditions** for the full enjoyment of fundamental rights. A citizen living in a degraded environment, a socially unsafe setting, or an area marked by inefficient institutions sees their ability to exercise the rights to work, health, education, and democratic participation **severely compromised**.

Constitutional and Normative Foundations

This domain rests on a particularly **rich and layered constitutional foundation**.

- **Article 2** recognizes and guarantees the "**inviolable rights of man**," affirming the integral unity of the person, who cannot be divided into separate compartments.
- **Article 3** obliges the Republic to remove obstacles that **limit equality in practice**, including environmental and security conditions that vary drastically across territories.
- **Article 9**, in its original and **2022 amended** form, assigns the Republic the duty to protect **landscape, environment, biodiversity, and ecosystems**, "also in the interest of future generations," elevating **environmental sustainability** to a constitutional principle.
- **Article 24** guarantees the right to **defense and access to justice**, while **Article 32** links the protection of **health** with that of the **environment**.
- **Article 111** establishes the principles of **due process** and **reasonable duration of proceedings**.

The normative horizon also extends to the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)** and the **United Nations' 2030 Agenda**, which translate these principles into measurable goals – from **climate action** and **sustainable cities** to **peace, justice, and strong institutions**.

Index Structure and Territorial Distribution

The **Cross-Cutting Rights Exclusion Index** aggregates **19 indicators** across three main dimensions:

1. **Environmental** – air quality, urban greenery, renewable energy, natural risks, water management.
2. **Security** – crime, perceived insecurity, urban decay.
3. **Institutions** – judicial efficiency, trust in institutions.

The territorial distribution reveals a **complex and non-linear picture**:

- **High exclusion**: **Lazio (108.1), Campania (107.6), Apulia/Puglia (106.4), Lombardy (102.4),** and **Umbria (102.4)**.
- The presence of **Lazio** and **Lombardy** – both major metropolitan and industrial regions – indicates that decades of **unsustainable growth** have exacted a cost on environmental and institutional quality.
- **Medium–high exclusion**: **Sicily (102.3), Sardinia (101.7), Abruzzo (101.4), Veneto (101.1),** and **Piedmont (100.8)**, showing that even traditionally "virtuous" regions exhibit notable cross-cutting vulnerabilities.
- **Medium-low exclusion**: **Emilia–Romagna (100.6), Molise (100.6), Calabria (100.3), Liguria (99.9),** and **Basilicata (99.8)** – a mixed picture in which some southern regions manage to contain cross-cutting exclusion better than certain central-northern ones.
- **Low exclusion**: **Tuscany (99.3), Marche (98.1), Friuli–Venezia Giulia (95.6), Aosta Valley/Valle d'Aosta (94.9),** and **Trentino-Alto Adige (93.7)**.
- **Trentino-Alto Adige** reaffirms its **excellence**, serving as a **model of balance** between economic development, environmental sustainability, and institutional quality.

Dimensions of Inequality: Coefficient of Variation in Cross-Cutting Rights

The cross-cutting domain exhibits the **highest average variability (CV 48.2%)** of all indices, with **63.2% of indicators exceeding 30% variability** and **three surpassing 100%**, reflecting deep asymmetries in living conditions and institutional performance.

- **Environmental indicators** show the widest gaps:
  - **Urban greenery** (CV **140.2%**) – **Trentino-Alto Adige** leads; **Puglia** is last.
  - **Population exposed to flood risk** (CV **123.1%**) – **Basilicata** least exposed; **Emilia–Romagna** most vulnerable.
  - **Renewable energy use** (CV **104.8%**) – **Aosta Valley** best; **Liguria** lagging.
  - **Population exposed to landslide risk** (CV **87.8%**) – **Aosta Valley** most critical; **Veneto** least.
  - **Environmental-protection spending** (CV **54.8%**) – **Aosta Valley** invests €536 per capita (nearly **4×** the national average); **Lombardy** spends only €78, showing that **wealth does not necessarily equal environmental commitment**.
- **Security and urban decay** show wide variability:
  - **Neighborhood degradation** (CV **48.6%**) – nearly absent in **Aosta Valley**, most severe in **Lazio**, especially in **Rome's suburbs**.
  - **Perceived insecurity** (CV **43.1%**) – **Campania** highest, **Aosta Valley** lowest.
  - **Landscape dissatisfaction** (CV **40.9%**) – highest in **Campania (36.5%)**, lowest in **Trentino-Alto Adige** and **Friuli–Venezia Giulia (~9%)**.
  - **Crime rate** (CV **23.9%**) – **Lazio** highest, **Basilicata** lowest.
- **Institutional trust and performance** also vary greatly:
  - **Civil-trial duration** (CV **45.5%**) – fastest in **Aosta Valley**, slowest in **Basilicata** (a **two-year gap**).
  - **Low trust in regional presidents** (CV **38.2%**) – minimum in **Aosta Valley**, maximum in **Sardinia**.
  - **Low trust in local police** (CV **34.5%**) – paradoxically **highest distrust** in **Aosta Valley**, lowest in **Liguria**.
  - **Low trust in public administration** (CV **28.6%**) – **Emilia–Romagna** most virtuous, **Umbria** worst.
  - **Low trust in the national government** (CV **20.6%**) – **Aosta Valley** highest trust, **Puglia** lowest.
- **Environmental performance indicators** are somewhat more even:
  - **Air quality** (CV **30.9%**) – best in **Sardinia**, worst in **Trentino-Alto Adige** and **Veneto**.
  - **Water leakage** (CV **23.3%**) – minimal in **Emilia–Romagna**, maximal in **Basilicata**.
  - **Environmental satisfaction** (CV **10.8%**) – highest in **Trentino–Alto Adige**, lowest in **Campania**.
  - **Fertility rate** (CV **8.9%**) – highest in **Trentino–Alto Adige**, lowest in **Sardinia**.
  - **Public spending on security** (CV **6.6%**) – least variable, though the gap between **Trentino-Alto Adige** and **Molise** still reflects differing policy priorities and administrative capacities.

Overall, this domain demonstrates that **environmental conditions, safety, and institutional performance** are not "neutral backgrounds" but **determinant elements** shaping citizens' real ability to exercise their rights – thus forming **deep fractures** in living conditions and democratic quality across regions.

Analysis of Cross-Cutting Rights Indicators

The analysis of 19 indicators shows exclusion arising from **three interconnected dimensions – environment, security, and institutions – **which reinforce one another, creating **new territorial geographies of disadvantage**. The resulting pattern **reshuffles traditional North–South divides**, revealing that living conditions depend on **political choices, administrative capacity, geography, and historical development paths**.

Regions with the **most critical conditions** exhibit **environmental degradation**, **widespread insecurity**, and **institutional fragility** feeding into each other.

- **Lazio, Campania,** and **Puglia** are the most penalized:
  - **Lazio** shows Italy's **highest crime rate** and **most extensive urban decay**, particularly in **Rome's outskirts**, along with poor **air quality**.
  - **Campania** records **highest perceived insecurity** and **greatest landscape dissatisfaction (36.5% vs national 21.3%)**, though it performs **well in renewable energy**.
  - **Puglia** has the **lowest urban-green area (10.6 m² per inhabitant) – 30× less** than **Trentino-Alto Adige** – and **low institutional trust** across the board.

A **particularly critical issue** concerns **judicial efficiency**: the **two-year gap** between **Aosta Valley (fastest)** and **Basilicata (slowest)** civil proceedings represents one of the most severe disparities in the entire Index. Across Italy, a **generalized institutional trust crisis** is evident – over **60%** of Italians express **distrust** in the **Public Administration**, with **Umbria** worst and **Emilia–Romagna** best. Paradoxically, **Aosta Valley**, while excelling elsewhere, reports **66.7% low trust** in local police, while **Sardinia** shows the **highest distrust** toward **regional presidents**.

Northern regions and parts of Central Italy display **environmental and institutional excellence**. **Trentino-Alto Adige** stands out for combining **environmental sustainability**, **administrative efficiency**, **high citizen satisfaction**, and **the country's highest fertility rate**, despite some specific weaknesses.

Energy sustainability overturns expectations: **Aosta Valley** and **Trentino-Alto Adige** lead alongside **southern regions** like **Basilicata** and **Calabria**, while **Liguria, Lazio, Emilia–Romagna,** and **Lombardy** trail behind.

Air quality brings surprises too: **Sardinia** ranks best, while industrially advanced **North-Eastern regions** (**Trentino–Alto Adige, Veneto**) fare worst, highlighting the **environmental cost of economic growth**. **Water leakage** again exposes **southern infrastructural weaknesses**, with **Basilicata** highest and **Emilia–Romagna** most efficient.

The **perceptual dimension** adds another layer: **environmental satisfaction** ranges from **85.7% (Trentino–Alto Adige)** to **58.8% (Campania)**; **landscape dissatisfaction** from **36.5% (Campania)** to **9.3% (Trentino–Alto Adige, Friuli–Venezia Giulia)**.

The **fertility rate** – a symbolic proxy for **trust in the future** – ranges from **1.7 children per woman** in **Trentino-Alto Adige** to **below 1.0** in **Sardinia**, well under the **replacement threshold of 2.1**, signaling a society struggling to offer younger generations **stability and confidence in the future**. In areas where **multiple exclusions overlap**, the combination of **insecurity, environmental degradation,** and **institutional inefficiency discourages long-term family planning**.

Concluding Observations

This analysis confirms that **cross-cutting rights** constitute the **most complex dimension of exclusion**, where **economic success** and **quality of life** do not necessarily coincide. Three key contradictions emerge:

1. **Between economic development and environmental sustainability** (e.g., **Lombardy vs Aosta Valley**).
2. **Between territorial wealth and institutional quality** (e.g., **large metropolitan regions vs small Alpine regions**).
3. **Between perceived security and actual crime rates**.

These contradictions show that **cross-cutting exclusion** is Italy's **most challenging frontier**, demanding a development model that reconciles **economic growth**, **environmental sustainability**, **social safety**, and **institutional efficiency**.

9. The Italian Geography of Exclusion: Specificities and Criticalities

The analysis conducted through the **Exclusion Index** offers a **clear and sobering portrait** of the territorial inequalities that mark Italy in the concrete implementation of constitutionally guaranteed rights. Seventy-seven years after the Italian Constitution came into force, the **promise of substantive equality remains largely unfulfilled**.

The multidimensional assessment – across seven domains: work, economy, social rights, services, health, education, and cross-cutting rights – documents with precision the existence of "**multiple Italies**," separated by differing opportunities, rights, and dignity. Clear disparities emerge: **44.3% of indicators show coefficients of variation above 30%**, revealing deep territorial divides.

The South: A Laboratory of Systemic Exclusion

The **Macroregion of Italy consisting of its Southern Regions (South)** emerges as the **epicenter of systemic, self-replicating exclusion**, affecting several regions with particular intensity. Calabria, Campania, Puglia, Sicily, and Sardinia not only occupy the worst positions in individual indicators but are **consistently clustered in the "high" and "medium-high" exclusion categories** across all domains – demonstrating the **structural** nature of the problem. These are not isolated pockets of hardship but **pervasive conditions** affecting labor markets, economic systems, social cohesion, access to services, and cultural opportunities simultaneously.

- **Calabria**: 40.6% of the population lives at risk of poverty; 20.7% experience severe material and social deprivation; youth unemployment reaches 35.5%, with only 20.3% of young people employed. Basic digital skills are scarce (32.2%), and rural employment is just 44.6%, among the lowest in Italy. These figures underscore **the progressive abandonment of inland areas** and the lack of effective territorial cohesion policies. Calabria ranks last in most service access and health indicators.
- **Campania**: equally critical, and in some respects even more uniformly so. 36.1% of the population is at risk of poverty; long-term unemployment is 12.7% (over three times the

national average); youth unemployment stands at 32.4%, and the gender employment gap reaches **46.6%**, the highest in the country. Educational exclusion is alarming: **16% dropout rate**, over half of students lack adequate literacy and numeracy skills, and **60% attend schools with poor accessibility**.

- **Sicily**: also falls into the "high exclusion" category, with critical scores in nearly every domain. Youth employment is just **23.1%**, youth unemployment **31.2%**, and rural employment **45.2%**.
- Non-regular work affects 16% of the employed, while 27.9% work under temporary contracts for at least five years. The "involuntary part-time" rate is 15%, and **33% of university graduates leave the island** in search of work, draining local human capital.
- **Puglia**: shows a **24.5% poverty risk**, 25.5% temporary employment, and 14.4% irregular employment. Rural employment stands at **51.9%**, and female representation in the regional council is the **lowest in Italy**. Health indicators reveal critical shortages in hospital beds and home care coverage, while only **39% of the population has basic digital skills**. Ultrafast broadband barely exceeds 50%.
- **Sardinia**, though in the "medium-high" category, exhibits systemic exclusion in several areas: a **Health Exclusion Index of 106.5** and **Education Exclusion Index of 103.6**; youth unemployment at **21%**, youth employment below 30%, and overall employment at **59.9%**. The **involuntary part-time rate (14.7%)** and **gender disparity (15.3%)** are the highest in Italy.

These data illustrate a **systemic failure of national cohesion policies** and the inability of both central and regional institutions to **address the structural causes of inequality**. The persistence – and in some cases worsening – of the **North–South divide** reveals that strategies so far have been **fragmented, short-term, and redistributive rather than transformative**, lacking a unified vision of local empowerment, institutional innovation, and human capital development.

Ordinary programming tools and extraordinary measures alike – **EU structural funds, the NRRP (PNRR), territorial pacts, and Special Economic Zones (ZES)** – have failed to produce lasting results because they seldom stemmed from **coordinated territorial needs assessments** or genuine **community co-participation**. In much of the South, weak infrastructure, fragile institutions, administrative instability, and generalized distrust in public policy have formed a **fertile ground for the reproduction of exclusion**.

Most concerning is the **intergenerational nature** of exclusion: it not only affects individuals today but **compromises the very construction of the future**. Where work is precarious, education inadequate, services inefficient, and institutional trust eroded, **substantive citizenship retreats**. Exclusion thus becomes **political** – disrupting community bonds, weakening civic cohesion, hollowing out democratic participation, and threatening the very foundation of the republican pact.

If tolerated or normalized, Italy risks solidifying a **"differentiated citizenship geography,"** where rights and opportunities depend on birthplace or residence – jeopardizing not only the South's stability but the **Republic's coherence itself**.

The North-East: A Model of Inclusion (Not Without Imbalances)

In stark contrast, **North-Eastern Italy** emerges as an **advanced model of inclusion, cohesion, and substantive constitutional implementation**.

Trentino-Alto Adige stands as the **national benchmark for territorial inclusion**, with an overall Exclusion Index of **93.9**, the lowest in Italy and **15.4 points below Calabria's**.

Employment reaches **77.6%**, youth unemployment is only **6.1%**, poverty risk is **5.7%**, and **69.2% of families report no financial difficulty**.

Health indicators are equally strong – the lowest avoidable mortality rate (15.1%) and the highest healthy life expectancy (66.2 years).

Yet, gender inequality persists: the lowest rate of female entrepreneurship, the highest gender pay gap in Italy, lower employment among mothers, and the widest STEM gender gap – proving that **territorial excellence does not automatically translate into gender equity**.

Friuli–Venezia Giulia, with an Exclusion Index of **96**, shows **consistent inclusion**: youth unemployment among the lowest, overall employment above the national average, and only 6.9% in relative poverty. Nonetheless, issues like overqualification, contract instability, and wage disparities remain.

Emilia–Romagna (Index **96.7**) excels across multiple areas – minimal material deprivation (0.9%), high civic participation, and strong digital infrastructure. Its **positive graduate migration balance (+23.3%)** – the best in Italy – reflects its ability to attract and retain skilled talent. Despite this, family financial stress and flood risk remain notable challenges.

Veneto, with an Index of **97.6**, maintains a **highly competitive and socially stable** profile: top-tier employment (94.2 Index), low long-term unemployment (1.6%), and solid welfare services. Its weaknesses include precarious contracts, a **negative graduate migration rate**, and modest digital skills.

Nevertheless, it sustains strong **internal consistency** and resilience to socioeconomic pressures.

The **distinctive feature** of the North-Eastern model lies in its **synergy between public investment and private initiative**, fostering trust, leveraging local resources, and balancing urban–rural development.

Quality services, social trust, and human capital enhancement generate a **virtuous cycle of inclusion** – not assistential but **developmental**. Here, inclusion strengthens not only social stability but also **economic competitiveness**, proving that **quality of life is a structural driver of growth and innovation**.

Digital Exclusion: The New Frontier of Marginalization

Digital exclusion is emerging as one of the **most severe modern inequalities**, increasingly defining the boundary between **active citizenship and marginalization**. Basic digital skills expose **a 21-point gap** between **Calabria (32%)** and **Lombardy (53.4%)** – millions of citizens effectively excluded from the digital society. Campania (32.5%), Sicily (34.5%), and Puglia (38.9%) also fall below the national average (45.9%), itself **10 points lower than the EU average**.

Regular Internet use exceeds **80%** in **Emilia–Romagna, Lombardy, and Lazio**, but stagnates at **67.6%** in **Calabria**, slightly higher in **Basilicata, Sicily, and Campania**. Household access to computers and Internet reaches **73.9% in Lombardy** but only **53.9% in Calabria** – a **20-point gap** reflecting deep economic and cultural divides.

Ultra-fast broadband coverage remains uneven: **Calabria (36.1%)**, **Sardinia (39.2%)**, and **Basilicata (43.2%)** rank lowest, while **Molise (84.6%)** performs unexpectedly well.

Local e-government digitalization reveals **dramatic disparities**: in **Veneto**, 76.7% of municipalities offer family services fully online; in **Molise**, only **23.9%**; in **Calabria**, **36.5%**. Public Wi-Fi access varies from **27% in Aosta Valley** to **83% in Emilia–Romagna**.

Citizens' **online interaction with the public administration** exceeds **50%** only in **Northern regions** (Trentino–Alto Adige, Veneto, Aosta Valley), while **Southern regions remain below 40%**.Paradoxically, **online civic participation** is higher in **Campania (34.3%)**, **Sicily**, and **Abruzzo** than in **Lombardy (20.3%)**, suggesting that **digital platforms can compensate for weak traditional participation channels**.

Digital exclusion thus means **inability to access online healthcare**, **public tenders**, **remote education**, or **financial services** – and, more broadly, **exclusion from the knowledge economy**. It deepens territorial marginalization by **blocking access to smart work, innovation networks, and digital entrepreneurship**.

To avoid turning the digital divide into a **"new Southern Question,"** Italy must **transform digitalization into a tool for cohesion**, not stratification.

Gender Inequality: The Other Face of Exclusion

Gender disparities intertwine with territorial ones, creating a **double exclusion** that disproportionately penalizes women.

- **Employment gap**: Campania (46.6%), Calabria (43%), Sicily (42.8%), Puglia (42.4%) – versus Valle d'Aosta (9.8%), Veneto (15.2%), Emilia–Romagna (16.3%).
- **Gender pay gap**: highest in **Trentino-Alto Adige (36.6%)**, followed by **Basilicata (35.8%)** and **Abruzzo (35.5%)** – proving that even wealthier regions harbor **structural inequities**.
- **Motherhood penalty**: in **Sicily**, mothers' employment is **39% lower** than that of childless peers; only **Aosta Valley, Umbria, and Molise** maintain parity.
- **Women in STEM**: the largest gaps in **Trentino-Alto Adige (51.8%)**, smaller in southern regions (~9%).
- **Political representation**: from **4.8% female councillors in Basilicata** to **41% in Lazio**; **female mayors** average just 15% (max 21.4% in Emilia–Romagna, min 5.8% in Campania).
- **Female entrepreneurship**: highest in **Molise (32.1%)** and **Basilicata (31.3%)**, lowest in **Trentino-Alto Adige (23%)** and **Lombardy (24.5%)** – suggesting survival strategies more than self-realization.

Two models of discrimination emerge:

- The **Southern model**, characterized by **multidimensional exclusion** – employment, wages, and representation all affected.
- The **Northern model**, marked by **subtle barriers** – better access but persistent wage gaps and glass ceilings.

Economic growth alone does not eliminate gender inequality: **dynamic labor markets still reproduce invisible hierarchies**.

Italy and Europe: Another Gap to Bridge

Compared to the EU, Italy's **internal divides** are compounded by **a structural lag** in key areas.

- **Employment rate (2023)**: 66.3% in Italy vs **75.3% EU average** – lowest among member states.
- **Female employment**: 56.5% vs **70.2% EU**, with a **gender gap of 19.5 points**, nearly **double** the EU average (10.3%).
- **Education**: dropout rate **10.4%** vs **9.5% EU**; NEETs **16.1%** vs **11.7% EU**, second-worst in Europe after Romania.
- **Digital skills**: 45.9% vs **55.6% EU**; ICT graduates only **1.1%**, lowest in the EU.
- **Poverty risk**: 18.9% vs **16.2% EU**, hiding extreme internal disparities (from **5.7% in Trentino-Alto Adige** to **40.6% in Calabria**).
- **Age dependency ratio**: 38.4% vs **33.9% EU**.

Positive exceptions:

- **Second-highest life expectancy** in Europe (83.8 years).
- **Top EU performer** in **urban waste recycling (53% vs 48.6% EU)**.

Yet, Italy's challenge is **twofold**: to **narrow internal divides** and **raise national performance** to European excellence standards.

Systemic Consequences

The data depict an Italy where **birthplace determines citizenship quality** – dividing "first-class" and "second-class" citizens. Territorial polarization erodes **national solidarity and cohesion**, breeding **institutional distrust in the South** and **fiscal resentment in parts of the North**, fueling demands for **differentiated autonomy**.

Systematic territorial exclusion leads to **democratic delegitimization**: falling voter turnout, rising distrust, and the growth of **anti-system movements**. The **Exclusion Index** thus serves not only as a **measurement tool** but as a **means to render inequalities visible** and **give voice to marginalized territories**.

The hope is that **continuous monitoring** of these indicators will **guide policy** toward restoring the **substantive value of constitutional rights**, turning formal recognition into **tangible equality for all citizens**.