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ITALIAN CITIES AS LOCAL CONTEXTS FOR SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE, INEQUALITY AND POVERTY

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Key words: social disadvantage, urban poverty, inequalities, urban structure, cities.

ABSTRACT

This work starts from the assumption that variation within a country “is a result of national welfare regimes and also the way patterns of social, economic, demographic and political development at the local level coalesce into recognisable social formations” (Mingione, Oberti, Pereirinha; 2002, p. 35). Therefore, through Census 2001 and some other data, the analysis is aimed at providing an overview of the general situation in Italy concerning social and economic aspects of different urban contexts, such as the demographic structure and composition of the population, the characteristics

of individuals and households, the situation of the labour market and local economy. We will in fact focus on particular characteristics determining social disadvantage, both at an individual and aggregate level, such as: the unemployment rate, the percentage of people without a compulsory education, households composition and the living conditions.

We will take in to consideration thirteen major Italian cities and “Provincia”, representing the biggest urban areas in Italy: Milan, Turin, Genoa, Verona, Venice, Bologna, Florence, Rome, Naples, Bari, Palermo, Catania and Cagliari. The use of both the city and its provincia could be useful to observe the distribution on the territory.

Concerning the conceptual approach, we will use a broad definition of resource exclusion focusing both at an individual (Townsend 1979) and aggregate level (Salmond and Crampton 2002). In fact, social disadvantage is more multidimensional and is not only limited to income. The main point is that in modern urban societies poverty cannot be limited to the material level of survival, but other dimensions related to the households, individuals and context (employment, labour market etc.) have to be taken in to account.