

Review of: "Public health efficiency and well-being in Italian provinces"

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The article investigates the relationship between public health efficiency and well-being in 102 Italian provinces. For this purpose, the author develops a synthetic index of well-being and applies a fixed-effect model and a 2SLS model from the use of lagged values of public health efficiency as instruments. Besides, the author includes a revision of the literature in order to justify the use of the synthetic index of wellbeing. Finally, the author concludes that public health efficiency is causally related to well-being. This paper is by no means lacking interest and the applied methodology is, in my opinion, appropriate since one of the main problems is reverse causality. However, I have several suggestions that could help the author to improve their article.

1. Introduction and theoretical framework

-The author explains some of the main papers about the concept of well-being. In the abstract, the author says that *the work begins with a critical review of the literature*. I am not sure about the conclusion of this critical review. I suppose that this review leads him to apply a synthetic index that subsumes all the components of well-being in one index. Maybe it should be explained.

-I am very interested in the process of decentralisation that is explained on page 2. Then, this issue is not explained in the result section. In this sense, the author says that Italy is an excellent case since there are disparities in the development of well-being. I was wondering if there are also disparities in the process of centralization/decentralisation depending on the province. I also wondering if there are differences in the way of financing the different provinces in Italy. There is any province under(over)funded?

1. Public health efficiency index and Provincial index of well-being

-Maybe would appropriate information about the database used in this paper. The author says that the origin is the survey "Health for All" (page 6) but would be fine more information, maybe in a footnote.

-One of my main concerns about this paper is the lack of psychological aspect regarding the synthetic index. I know that the author uses health information for its construction but it is probably useful also to use psychological information. I presume that it is impossible to rebuild the index and, therefore, reestimate all the models. I only want to know if this lack of psychological information in the construction of the index is because of the theoretical model.

1. Econometric strategy

As I say in the first part of this review I presume that the empirical strategy is adequate since the objective is to control either “those characteristics which remain fixed over time” (from the fix effect model) and the reverse causality implied in the model (from the 2SLS). However, I have doubts about the control variables used in the model; specifically, I was wondering about the lack of variables such as gender or age.

1. Results

-I have some doubts regarding the results of the income coefficient. I think the result of this paper is related to the negative impact of income on well-being. The author says that this relation is controversial and references the work of Calcagnini, G., & Perugini, F. (2019a) but I think these authors found that the effect of income on well-being is positive and significant, just the opposite of the findings of this paper. I guess, this counterintuitive result deserves a more extended explanation.

-I also have doubts about some results of the test that the author adds in the fifth section. For example, when the author says “But the p-value of the joint test of Taxes and Taxes2 is 0.0000, that is, both regressors are important for the model”, what is exactly this test about Taxes and Taxes2?

1. Concluding remarks

- Perhaps it would be convenient to elaborate the final part to explain why these obtained results are important.

Minor comments

Besides the former comments, I have some minor ones that, in my opinion, deserve a review.

-On page 3, epigraph 1, line 4 it lacks the year of the paper/book of Kuznets.

-I identify a problem in the use of quotation marks throughout the paper. See for example page 4, line 8 or page 17, last line. This problem makes it difficult to read to some extent.

-On page 4, line 21 the acronym QUARS was introduced but the meaning of this acronym is not explained until page 9.

-I do not understand the word “allergy” on page 5.

-The map legends on page 9 are difficult to see.

-The title of Table 1 (page 10) and table 3 (page 20) should be moved to the next page.

- In general terms, I believe that the paper needs significant editing work.

