

**Titolo del Progetto**

The metaphor of the "South" in the comparative perspective. A legal, sociological and economic attempt to explain regional asymmetries within countries and the governmental attempts to reduce them

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**Abstract:**

The Southern question, conceived as a problem of imbalance/rebalance between geographical areas and their respective communities, has been a peculiarity of the Italian social, political, cultural, economic and legal system.

Although so strongly identified with Italy, although treated as a field of investigation in both the political-constitutional, economic and social spheres, the Southern question has never been tackled from the point of view of the form of the State. That is, as a question characterizing not only the State as government, not only the Italian society as community, but the relationship between the two, thus placing the research within the SH2\_4 sector.

The research project proposed here intends to address this perspective, trying to answer - also by comparing European experiences - whether the Southern question can be a variable of the constitutional model in the contemporary form of State and why in Italy such a model did not accomplish with the task it endorsed.

In fact, the Italian constitutional framework, its legislative and administrative implementation and the management of the European funds for Cohesion for promoting equality among regions did not meet expectations: living standards, health services and well being, but also productivity or educational opportunities to young generations do not seem to have undertaken the initial steps towards a convergent dynamics across Italian regions, neither under the original constitutional rules nor after that constitutional reform of 2001. PNRR is, from that point of view, a challenge not only in managing funds, but also in the economic policies.

After a first historical and comparative analysis and a study on the concept of the “South” in the international order, the project will be a threefold focus in specific and emblematic issues of Southern in Italy: the use of EU funds for Cohesion, the insularity question, the impact of rules on a labour context characterize by high illegality. The two main sections of the project will compare the Italian criticality in facing the Southern question with other similar European contexts, with the aim to identify a common variable of the contemporary State and to answer whether such a persistent inequality in Italy is due to specific social and economic forces, and to historic heritage socio-economic conditions, or to the institutional and administrative inadequacy.

The proposal research will have a multidisciplinary approach, thanks to the contribution of sociologists, economists, geographers, besides jurists. As for the outcomes, in the light of the different findings of each working group, the project is aimed at identifying the reasons why the Italian Southern question is so hard to be solved and how the approach needs to be changed, taking into consideration the comparative suggestions.