MARCO PACCAGNELLA, PAOLO SESTITO (BANK OF ITALY & INVALSI, ITALY): SCHOOL CHEATING AND SOCIAL CAPITAL.

Abstract:
In this paper we investigate the relationship between social capital and cheating behaviour in standardized tests. Given the low-stakes nature of these tests, we interpret the widespread presence of cheating as a signal of low trust towards central education authorities and as lack of respect for the rule of law. We find that cheating is negatively correlated to several social capital proxies in the local environment where a school is located. We also distinguish between different dimensions of social capital: contrasting universalistic and particularistic social values, cheating appears to be negatively correlated only to measure of universalistic social values. The negative correlation between social capital and cheating is robust to the use of different measures of social capital, and to the inclusion of several factors which may affect students' and teachers' behaviour.