

Labour Relations in Italy, 1900-2000  
Methodological Paper

Andrea Caracausi (University of Padua, Department of History)

Luca Mocarelli (University of Milan-Bicocca, Department of Economics)

This paper aims to present methodological criteria used for the collection of Italian labour relations for the cross-section 1900-2000. All data has been collected using the results of the Italian General Population Censuses made in 1936 and 2001 by the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT: “Istituto Nazionale di Statistica”, on 1936 named as “Istituto Centrale di Statistica del Regno d’Italia”)<sup>1</sup>.

For the cross-section 1900 we used data available for the year 1936. Although Italian censuses are also available for the previous period (1901, 1911, 1921 and 1931), the criteria used in the formation of the national census in 1936 are better for a more detailed identification of labour relations. Of course for the period before the WWII, each census has some problems and the 1936 is not an exception (Vitali 1970; Zamagni 1987, 27, Manfredi 2011). In general, considering the economically active population, the main matter is the underestimation of the female labour and the impossibility to take count of the irregularity of the seasonal work (Manfredi 2010, 2011). The second point is the underestimation of the female work. It depends by a strong presence of women who performed contemporary domestic, industrial and even agricultural works directed to market and non-market economy (Zamagni 1987, 37; Curli, Pescarolo 2003; Manfredi *forthcoming*).

While the 1901 census has been defined as one of the best results for the period before WWII, we have chosen the 1936 for the following reasons.

First of all, as for the other previous censuses, the labrel 12 and 13 are not clearly identifiable and separable. In particular in the industrial sector (with the only exception of the textile sector) the position of “patrons” (labrel 12) and “directors” (for a definition see below) was aggregated to “independent artisans” (labrel 12: “(people) who do their work independently”:

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<sup>1</sup> Sources: *VIII Censimento generale della popolazione, 21 aprile 1936 – XIV*, Vol. I-IV, Roma, Tipografia Ippolito Failli 1937 – Anno XV; *XIV Censimento generale della popolazione*, see: <http://dawinci.istat.it/> (last reference: 10 June 2011).

see MAIC 1904a, vol. IV, LXXXIV; Matroluca, Verrascina 2011, 28). Secondly, familiar coadjutants (*coadiuvanti familiari*, as wives or sons) have been assimilated to patrons and/or independent artisans: in this case the number of entrepreneurs and/or artisans is overestimated (MAIC 1904a, vol. IV, LXXXV). Finally, the boundaries of the 1936 were quite similar to the actual boundaries (for these problems regarding Italy see Vitali 1970; Zamagni 1983, 37).

On the other hand a critical point of the 1936 Census is that the condition of “unemployment” was not considered because the Census was very closed to the Census in 1931 (Matroluca, Verrascina 2011, 28). However, for the first time it appeared the category of people “in search of the first occupation”. Their position was included in the not economically active population (Manfredi 2011).

The cross-section 2000 is based on the national census made in 2001. For critical points on this census see below.

#### Sources for population figure

For 1936 data, the population figure is the result of the population census. The total resident (*legal*) population is 42.993.602 people (M 21.123.730; F. 21.869.872). However, 474.138 people were in the Italian colonies and 26.929 were resident abroad (tot. 42.492.535). We made an adjustment, excluding this population from the entire population. The total extension of the region without the colonies was 31.019.020 *ha*.<sup>2</sup> We do not have considered the part of population that was present abroad or in the colonies. In particular a part of population was employed in the operation for the Ethiopia's war and it has been included in a special category (*popolazione speciale*). The covered region is correspondent to the Italian peninsula (the “Kingdom of Italy”), quite similar to the contemporary borders. The reconstruction of the labour relation using the census identified 41.859.120 people. The number is quite less than the total of population (42.492.535), maybe for people that were not resident during the moment of the census.

For 2000 also population figure is the result of the population census (made in 2001). The total resident population is 56.995.744 (male: 27.586.982, female: 29.408.762). The total extension of the region is 30.132.858ha (301.336 km<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>2</sup> VIII Censimento generale della popolazione, 21 aprile 1936 – XIV, Vol. III, *Regno. Popolazione – territorio – famiglie – convivenze – sesso – stato civile – età – stranieri*, Parte Seconda, *Tavole*, Roma, 1938, tavola 1.

### Map. 1. Italy in 1919



Map. 1. Italy in 2001



### Estimation of the economically active population

The economically active population is the result of the census. In 1936 the census considers only the working population that is *more than 10 years old* (both female and male). Maybe part of the population from 6 to 9 years old could be included in the economically active population, but their presence has been not registered. However, as we said previously, the census also includes and distinguish economically active population as familiar assistants or coadjutants (labrel 14) and people (mainly) indicate in the “domestic economy”.

In 2001 the census considers only the working population that is *more than 15 years old* (both female and male). The census also includes population in the reciprocal labour, as familiar assistants in the “domestic economy”. Housewives are excluded from the labour forces, but

they are indicated in the non-labour force. In the census people were indicated as “employed” if during the week before the Census they have done at least one hour of paid work. “Unemployed” are people who in the previous 4 weeks have tried to find a work and they would be able to start a work in the following two weeks (Matroluca, Verrascina *forthcoming*, 30)

### Estimation and extrapolations

For the 1936 data on labour relations are extrapolated from the tables on the “Population present (+ 10 years old) divided on gender, professional category and *position* in the profession” (Table II, vol. IV, page 3). The economically active population is the result of the total population minus the population present in the census (more than 10 years old). The *position* in the profession – as stated in the census – is used to determine the labour relation. It is like the occupational structure. During the census people was requested to answer the *main* occupation. So, in case of double-occupation or temporary occupation they were invited to indicate the occupation that they were doing for the great part of the time during the year. In the industry and trade the “positions” were the following:

- *Padroni* (Patrons)
- *Artigiani con dipendenti* (artisans with employees)
- *Artigiani senza dipendenti* (artisans without employees)
- *Liberi professionisti* (liberal artists)
- *Dirigenti* (Managers)
- *Impiegati* (Employees)
- *Personale di servizio e di fatica* (Servants)
- *Operai* (Workers)
- *Lavoratori a domicilio*

Patron means “employer or entrepreneur”. In this position they were classified normally the entrepreneurs or coordinator of enterprises. Normally these employers had more than three workers, so they were included in the lab\_rel 13. Artisans were classified with or without employees. In the first case their labrel is 12, in the second one 13. Liberal artists were people that made their work normally as independent so they were signed with the labrel 12. Doctors, teachers, engineers, and lawyers that leased their work regularly for public or private enterprises were classified as “employees” (*impiegati*) with the labrel 14 or 18.

*Dirigenti* were people that coordinate functions or people: they were normally employees and so they were included in the labrel 14 or 18. Employees (*impiegati*) were normally wage-earners, so they were included in the labrel 14 or 18, as servants, workers and *lavoratori a domicilio*.

A special category is the “*coadiuvanti*”. They were normally members of the family in the workshop and/or in the factory. As stated in the sources they “helped the chief of the family, their husband or other familiars”. They were only in the figure of patrons or artisans. So we do not have included the total amount of familiar coadjutants (normally in *cursive*) from the total number of patrons and artisans. Conversely we have included them in the number of labrel 14.

The positions in the agricultural sector have been assimilated in the positions used in trade and industry. This operation has been made yet by the census. For instance, the *patrons* included the *conduttori non coltivatori* (“entrepreneurs who attended to the cultivation of their lands, using wage-earners”). This operation does not imply relevant changes in the occupational status.

In 2001, the position in the profession is indicated as followed. We have assigned a specific labour relation to each position. Entrepreneurs are people who manage an enterprise independently using employees (labrel 13). “Libero professionista” (literally free professional people”) is a man that performs a profession or a liberal art independently (layers, notary, etc.: labrel 12). An independent worker (*lavoratore in proprio*) is a man who manages an agricultural enterprise or a small industrial and commercial firm, an artisan workshop, or a public exercise with his work. Here we also have small sharecroppers and people who work at home (labrel 12). Employees or *other subordinated positions*: people who work with or without contract for a public or private enterprise and receive a form of wage (labrel 14 or 18). “Socio di cooperativa” is an “active member of a production or service cooperative”. He gains rewards in money without a regular contract but proportionally to his work and/or with a share of the profit of the enterprise (labrel 18). Familiar coadjutants (*coadiuvanti familiari*) are people who work with a member of the family in a small business that produce for the market, but they do not have a regular labour contract (labrel 14).

#### Balance of the different labour relations

<b>Labour relation</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	12979907	31,01%
2	365469	0,87%
3	829054	1,98%
5	9856686	23,55%
8	6376	0,02%
12	3616291	8,64%
13	1278974	3,06%
14	11991174	28,65%
18	935189	2,23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41859120*</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

Tab. 2. Labrel in Italy, 2001.

<b>Labour relation</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	25774932	45,22%
3	2748530	4,82%
5	7478550	13,12%
12	4282604	7,51%
13	665819	1,17%
14	12539136	22,00%
18	3506173	6,15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56995744</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

A comparison between the two different cross-sections show some points. The analysis includes all the labrels and the total amount of population, including the labrel 1. The main point is the growth of the percentage of labrel 1 (from 31.01% to 45.22%). Secondly, the spread of the labor for the market means a decline in the percentage of domestic servants (labrel 5) from 23.55% to 13.12%. *Inside* the share of people *who work* (labrel 12-18) there is a significant decline in the percentage of labrel 13 (from 7.18 to 3.17% on the total of working people) and a growth in the number of wage-earners (both 14 and 18: from 72 to 76%).

Further deeper analyses will allow for a better description of the different labrel's evolution, also for the previous centuries. Some critical remarks: in labrel 18 the number of non-market wage earners is difficult to estimate for the 1936 because of lacking of clear indication in the sources with few exceptions in transports and communications (Istat 1938, 37-39). In labrel

3: the number for the 1936 is probably under estimated, because the question was lacking in the questionnaire of the census.

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