

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SELF-EMPLOYMENT**

**A FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT IN ITALY**

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## 1. Introduction

This paper presents an assessment of the nature of self-employment, its determinants and trends in Italy. A conceptual framework is developed in order to explain the major modifications and changes occurring in the Italian labour market, which, in one way or another, may be described as a structural transformation of work. Using interdisciplinary literature, the paper discusses the passage towards a post-Fordist society (Belussi and Garibaldo, 1996), where independent work (or self-employment) becomes a central social feature. The growth of self-employment is therefore not interpreted simply as a contemporary statistical trend, but indeed as an irreversible tendency of the restructuring pattern of the economic system, which affects more generally the entire labour market<sup>1</sup>. What distinguishes modern times is not the presence of traditional self-employment, but the emergence of new forms of independent workers<sup>2</sup>, the "second generation" self-employment, as argued for instance by Bolognani and Fumagalli (1997). This 'second generation' of self-employment is loosely connected with local and global networks, in services, and in manufacturing sectors, which base their activity on co-operative work or on the new professions, focused on relational and communicative kinds of work. The emergence of micro-organisations and network firms (with the strategic integration of subcontractors and suppliers in new product co-development projects, Arcangeli and Belussi, 1998) is the distinctive character of the so-called post-Fordist phase of development.

In section 2, a description of the importance of self-employment in the overall Italian official statistics is outlined. This section also deals with the analysis of key trends in specific sub-sectors of the economic activity in which self-employment predominates. In section 3, an overview of the policy framework related to self-employment is discussed, together with a taxonomy of the main forms of self-employment in Italy. Some examples of support programmes are presented in section 4, where a tentative evaluation illuminates the difficulties actually encountered in this country in carrying out the cost-benefit analysis, given the fact that evaluation programmes are in their infancy. In section 5 some conclusions are drawn, and some policy recommendations are stated.

## 2. A quantitative estimation of self-employment

Among the larger European countries, Italy exhibits the most significant share (see Tab.1) of the working population in the category of self-employed (definable as employers and persons working on their own account<sup>3</sup>). This is the result of an historical trend of weak (and late) industrialisation, and a more recent feature of economic decentralisation (Garofoli, 1978; Brusco, 1982). In particular, this pattern of industrial restructuring towards small sized organisations<sup>4</sup> was observed during 1970s and

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<sup>1</sup> On this issue see also Williams et al. (1987), Hirst and Zeitlin, 1992, and Lyon-Caen (1996).

<sup>2</sup> One deals here with a revolutionary "transformation of work", depicting a transition from the old Fordist model of production, "wage and salaried employment" (with a dominant prescriptive work), towards a post-Fordist form with the "debureaucratisation and entrepreneurialisation of work", which characterises our present times (with work focused on individual knowledge, skills, creativity, competencies, responsibilities, and relational capabilities). Here we find the existence of a new model of non-Tayloristic work organisation based on "knowledge workers" (Rullani, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> As in the OECD definition (accepted worldwide) used for the elaboration of Labour Force Statistics (see, for instance OECD, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> The development of self-employment is intrinsically connected to the Italian

1980s (Piore and Sabel, 1984; Brusco and Sabel, 1981; Garofoli, 1978), and even more recently, as discussed by Best (1991) and Harrison (1994).

Some comparisons with other European countries may help us to understand the particular nature of the Italian trend towards self-employment.

In Europe, Italy represents not only the country where the levels of self-employment (if weighed against total employment) are highest, but also the country where, in the last decades, we have been witness to one of the highest rates of expansion of independent types of work, together with the United Kingdom where self-employment<sup>5</sup> has moved from 8.1% (1980) of total employment to 13.1% (1996), a share that, however, is still barely half of that of Italy.

During 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, both the absolute and relative level of self-employment rose: from 4,724,000 in 1980 to 4,977,000 in 1996. Thus, the weight of the category of "independent" workers (measured within the category of "employed") has shifted upwards of about 2 percentage points, from 23.2 to 24.8%. The characterisation of the Italian economy as a weak *wage employment economy* comes from comparison with other countries. It is significant to observe that even during 1980s and 1990s the share of wage employees never exceeded 71%, while even in Spain, a country with a lower level of industrialisation, over the last fifteen years, the share changed from 69.1% to 74.6%, and not to mention France (1980: 83.2; 1996: 88.6), or Germany (1980: 88.2%,

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model of industrial organisation: we are referring here to the "industrial district" model (for an overview see the following references: Becattini, 1987 and 1989, Amin and Robins, 1990; Sforzi, 1990; Amin, 1991; Harrison, 1990; Bellandi, 1993; Bellandi and Russo, 1994; Anastasia, Corò, and Crestanello, 1995; Dei Ottati, 1987 and 1994; Benko and Lipietz, 1992; Antonelli 1986 and 1994; Garofoli, 1983 and 1992; Brusco, 1989; Capecchi, 1990; Bull, Pitt, and Szarka, 1991; Gottardi, 1996; Longhi and Quere, 1994; Gobbo, 1989; and Smitz, 1992). During the period from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, industrial districts were organised on the basis of large numbers of small and artisan firms, with (especially in the past) a ring-without-a-core structure. Firms were very flexible and competitive, and the development of these local production systems was due to a deepening of specialisation and local disintegration of production processes, and to an accumulation of tacit knowledge and incremental innovations. These systems were mainly specialised in very traditional products, like, textiles (Prato for low cost wool, Biella for high quality wood, and Como for silk), clothing and knitting (Carpi in Modena, Vicenza, Reggio Emilia), furniture (Pesaro and Alto Livenza in the province of Treviso and in the province of Pordenone; Manzano for chairs, Matera-Altamura for leather upholstery), jewellery (Vicenza, Arezzo, and Valenza Po, near Alessandria), footwear (Montebelluna for ski boots, Riviera del Brenta, near Venice, for women's shoes, and San Mauro Pascoli), but also in some advanced mechanical and engineering fields especially skill-intensive ones, like spectacle frames (in Cadore, near Belluno), packaging machinery (in Bologna), footwear machinery (Vigevano), tiles and tiles machinery (Sassuolo), bathroom fixtures and related machinery (Civita Castellana, not far from Rome), biomedical instruments (Mirandola, in the Modena province), electronic car alarms (Varese), stainless steel small appliances (Treviso), or water taps and fittings (Novara). These scattered observations have been collected by the author of this paper. For further analyses see specifically also a more applied bibliography, listed as follows: Belussi, 1993 and 1995; Falzoni, Onida, and Viesti, 1992; Bozzi and Bramanti, 1994; Camagni and Rabellotti, 1994; Carminucci and Casucci, 1995; Crestanello, 1993 and 1995; Dei Ottati, 1996, Istituto Tagliacarne and Censis, 1992, Nazzaruolo, 1990; Mussanet and Paolozzi, 1992; Nuti, 1992; and Sforzi, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> The rise of self-employment and the spread of part-time work has been analysed by Coutts and Rowthorn (1995). However, Robson (1997), in a recent article, has argued that the rise of the self-employment itself is the main factor behind the reported decline of earnings which has occurred in UK since 1980. He found also a reduction in the level of capital per self-employed worker, an effect that he has associated with a decline in the quality of the average self-employed business.

1996: 87.8) and the United Kingdom (1980: 91.9%, 1996: 86.4), where we systematically find higher levels of typical mass production jobs<sup>6</sup>.

But if we look only at the figures of the "manufacturing and service sectors", eliminating the effect of agricultural jobs from the figure (a sector, in all countries, which has always had high level self-employment), the Italian trends are seen to be even more spectacular: in 15 years the share of self-employment has grown from 19% to 23% (i.e. from 3,344,000 to 4,280,000).

In comparison<sup>7</sup>, in the UK the same percentage has grown from 7.1 to 12.2, in Germany from 8.7 to 10.6, and in Spain<sup>8</sup> from 16.2 to 18.5, while declining in France from 10.5 to 8.4.

As regards Italy, the historical tendency for non agricultural self-employment to fall with modernisation and development has been reversed.

It is widely recognised that the presence of self-employment has reinforced economic flexibility, contributing to a more efficient allocation of resources. This in one sense contrasts with the view that the Italian labour market has long been insufficiently flexible, and that the industrial structure was populated by firms unable to meet their fluctuating needs for labour. Perhaps many observers limited their analyses only to sporadic cases, or situations dominated by the presence of large unionised firms, like Fiat, in the automobile industry. Clearly, the striking dynamics of self-employment illustrated above, may challenge certain "official interpretations". There is an urgent need to bring new light on the effectiveness of the social and economic mechanisms that have generated a very efficient competitive industrial system in some areas, and in others, mostly located in the south of Italy, there is a stagnant and socially regressive model<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Cfr. OECD Labour Force Statistics (1997).

<sup>7</sup> The Italian propensity to self-employment rates higher than even the most entrepreneurial society, the US economy, where recent estimations, using the Current Population Survey, have calculated that about 1 in 11 workers was self-employed in 1994 (Bregger, 1996). The result was also found by (Cowling and Mitchell, 1997). Their key finding was that the self-employed/wage employed wage differential has a high and positive effect upon the proportion of the work force in self-employment. The authors found that it is the duration of unemployment (and not simply the stock of unemployed people) that is associated with a high rate of firms start-ups. This evidence may imply that self-employment may be the last resort for certain individuals marginal to the employed sector, and facing lengthy spells of unemployment. On the same question Parker (1997) found that the principal cause of rising self-employment income inequality over the period examined (1976-91), was a substantial increase in the heterogeneity of the self-employed themselves. In contrast, the increased numbers engaged in self employment over the period seems to have had no discernible effect on inequality within the parameters of the self-employment income distribution.

<sup>8</sup> With special reference to the Spain case, see Arranz, Garcia-de-la-Cruz, and Ruesga (1997).

<sup>9</sup> If we want to explore the dynamics of the Italian labour market we must spatially segment our analysis. Contrasting the thesis that attributes unemployment problems to the excessive regulation and practices that sets wages too high, we should note that high unemployment rates are not experienced in the "industrial triangle" (Piedmont and Lombardy) or in the North-East regions (Emilia Romagna, Veneto, and Friuli Venezia Giulia), where trade unions are strongly organised, collective bargaining very practised, working hours partially controlled by the trade union's firm council, and factory wages determined by contractual bargaining on the firm level. In fact, high level of unemployment characterises alone Mezzogiorno, where trade unionism is practically non existent (or limited to the role of assistance with unemployment benefits), official salaries are low, job insecurity is high because of the high rates of firm failure, and where the plague of the black economy (particularly in some sectors, like textiles or footwear) covers a large part of the existing production

However, if we focus our attention on the most efficient part of the Italian economic structure (the industrial clusters located in the areas of the “first industrialisation”, and regions characterised by the development of small firms: often described as diffuse industrialisation), we have to admit that from the point of view of the utilisation of human resources, the Italian labour market has been performing quite well, in harmony with the prevailing emergence of flexible production systems, and with the adoption of advanced methods of firm management (lean production, just in time, use of flexible, and even contingent work).

In addition, the high turbulence (high rates of firm start-up and closure, frequent legal transformation, firm acquisition, outsourcing) evidenced in the industrial structure, has been widely documented (Solinas, 1992; Belussi and Pozzana, 1995; and Contini and Pacelli, 1995), and brought with it a high level of work mobility, increasing the risk of work displacement due to the obsolescence of old skills. So, the transformation of the Italian economy in the direction of increased flexibility may be rooted in the characteristics of the studied industrial districts (Bellandi, 1992), network-firms (Belussi, 1992; Belussi and Arcangeli, 1998), artisan structure (Bellandi, 1993), work co-operation (Belussi, 1996). In this process of intensification of flexibility and mobility, the expansion of self-employment has played an important role.

We can now develop our analysis, using another source of data (the Italian Istat survey). This will allow us to focus on the idiosyncratic characteristics of Italian self-employment. The Istat data divide self-employment on the basis of five components: entrepreneurs, professional people, autonomous workers (shop-keepers, artisans, and farmers), co-operative workers, and working family members (coadjutants). Clearly, our interest is to distinguish within self-employment itself, and to highlight the importance of the two most important distinct types of categories: entrepreneurs and persons working on their own (autonomous workers)<sup>10</sup>.

Tables 2 and 3 show the intertemporal dynamics of the various sub-groups. During the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, significant growth is shown by the sub-groups of “professional workers” and “entrepreneurs” (the former shift from 1.5% to 3.6%; the latter from 0.7% to 1.8%). Within the economy, this expansion is the most interesting change which occurred among the self-employed. Turning our attention to the group of “autonomous workers” which represents, the dominant sub-group in Italy, the trend is quite flat (1980: 18.9% of total employment; 1995: 18.1%). In building and in construction, on the contrary, the figures reveal a marked increase of the sub-group of “autonomous workers”. Their expansion is clearly related to the implementation of a new model of work organisation, based on the utilisation of subcontractors.

In manufacturing, the share of entrepreneurs and professionals grows, but the share of “autonomous workers” remains more or less constant. However, within manufacturing, many contrasting processes seem to be at work, bearing different signs: some absorption of traditional small artisan firms (in declining areas), and a strong pattern of small firm creation (dynamic areas). In the last decade employment has grown particularly fast in firms with less than 19 employees. In other words, many empirical analyses have shown that within the artisan sector, even if the number of autonomous workers has not increased very much, the number of wage employees related to the artisanal sector has grown dramatically. So, nowadays, the artisan sector is providing employment to a significant share of the total wage employment. Thus, in recent years, Italy has experienced not only the

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structure. The Italian puzzle has been examined with a great accuracy by the contribution of de Luca and Bruni (1993).

<sup>10</sup> On the overlapping of these categories see Duffy and Stevenson (1984), and Dale (1991).

expansion of a flexible self-employment sector, but also a dramatic shift in labour demand towards less protected working conditions and non unionised organisations.

Table 3 illustrates that, the social figure of the “autonomous worker” in Italy has remained important during 1990s: in 1995, generally speaking, of every three self-employed workers, two were autonomous workers. For the Italian case, some plausible explanations of this phenomenon have been proposed by Sestito (1989): a) the diminishing role of scale economies, b) the advantages in tax reduction/evasion of self-employment and employer contribution, c) the role of self-employment in hiding unemployment during business cycle downturns, and, finally (see also Rapiti, 1997), d) the relative advantage of small industrial structures in managing turbulent industrial relations, and final demand instability<sup>11</sup>.

Using the data collected by the Bank of Italy, Sestito (1989) has estimated a cross-sectional model for analysing the probability of dependent workers to choose self-employment. The main results are the following. First, the probability to be a dependent worker is decreasing with age, in all geographic areas, for both sexes, and for all levels of education. Second, while for women the probability of being an employee is growing with level of education, for men, this bond initially decreases and then increases (self-employed are grouped into the university graduated and less trained workers; this corresponds to the carry over of liberal professions or the manual work in agriculture or in industry<sup>12</sup>).

An interesting element of analysis is the frequency, and the intensity, we observe in the entry (and exit) from self-employment. Until 1990, the quarterly Istat survey provided some detailed information in this regard. The data presented in Tab. 4 show a quite clear pattern. Firstly, one may observe that overall mobility is quite consistent: among wage workers, 10 employees out of 100 each year leave their employment, while the group of the self-employed is even more unstable (19 workers out of 100 change occupation), for the wage sector or because they leave the active labour force. This pattern is quite stable in the three periods under examination (79-80), (84-85), and (89-90). Secondly, considering that the share of self-employment has increased its share in the total economy, but that higher flows are not visible, we must hypothesise the following sequence. New entries occur both in self-employment and in the wage sectors, but the most relevant flows are those from unemployment (or the non labour market force) into wage sectors; on the contrary, a significant share (10 people out of 100) of new employment in self-employment is from wage labour. The change of the status from dependent jobs to self-employment describes the typical Italian start-up mechanism through which new firms are created.

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<sup>11</sup> It is interesting to observe that very similar factors have been discussed by Blau (1987), in order to explain the rising trend in the self-employed non agricultural labour force in the United States. Among the most significant causes, Blau indicates: changes in technology, industrial structure, tax rate, and social-security retirement benefits. From the analysis of Pissarides and Weber (1989) we can infer that the tax-evasion explanation seems also to be relevant for the UK case. Estimating consumer expenditures for various groups, they calculate that true self-employment income is 1.55 times that reported. They also estimated that the size of black economy in UK is about 5.5 percent of GDP.

<sup>12</sup> Using the 1991 French Household Survey of Financial Assets, Laferrere and McEntee (1995) examined the determinants of self-employment, using data on intergenerational transfers of wealth, education, and informal human capital. They found evidence of the importance played by the family (intergenerational transfer of wealth, and family transfer of human capital). They also found evidence that a person is less likely to move into self-employment if he obtains a higher level education. Thus the system of higher education in France appears to dampen the movement into self-employment from wage work.

Using the huge data base of Inps, Contini and Rapiti (1994) have measured the intensity of mobility flows in the Italian labour market, which are more significant than initially supposed. In particular, they have estimated the probability for dependent workers (the wage sector) to enter self-employment. The highest percentages are related to the following attributes (see Tab. 5):

- employed in industry or in commercial activities,
- white collar worker (or manual worker),
- between 21-35 years old,
- formerly employed in a small firm (less than 20 employees), and situated in the East of Italy.

It is important here to stress the situation in the South of Italy where start-up rates are quite significant. They must not be considered as good indicators of firm creation. In fact, in those regions both entry and exit rates are very high but the net stock of new firm creation is not very significant. A tentative explanation could be connected with the characteristics of entrepreneurship of the Mezzogiorno. Given the fact that markets do not operate perfectly (failures are not sufficiently sanctioned, credit is not well rationed, banks lack the ability to assess good entrepreneurial projects), the agents that give rise to such a high firm birth rate always come from the same small group of non risk-averse subjects, who tend to repeat their entrepreneurial venture (even after past negative experiences).

We have just seen that the weight of self-employment in Italy is significant (about 30%<sup>13</sup>), especially if compared with other European countries. This trend has remained quite stable over the last fifteen years, but many changes have occurred overall within various branches. In particular, industry has lost about 1.5 positions while the growth of employment in services has been only about 1 million (Rapiti, 1997). Let us also consider another important change. On one hand, in sectors where self-employment was very important traditionally (agriculture and commerce), we have had a process of rationalisation and restructuring, so the share of self-employment has decreased relatively (but not in the emerging professions of tertiary activities based on communication and information services); on the other hand, in manufacturing and building, sectors where self-employment was relatively low, and was supposed to be declining, there has been a sudden upsurge, thanks to the impact of outsourcing processes, industrial restructuring, subcontracting, and economic decentralisation. It is wrong, in other words, to limit our analysis to the aggregate figure. In fact, changes have been far deeper than they appear at first sight.

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<sup>13</sup> In 1995 the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), published a new series of data, which counts within labour force the impact of part-time workers and irregular activities, introducing the indicator of standard labour-unit (where the focus is on yearly working hours). From these new estimates, the impact of self-employment (including various irregular forms of false artisans, independent black-economy workers, and so on), on the whole economy emerges with a great force. Overall it accounts for the entire economy about 40% (and not 30% as in the official statistics). Moreover, the "enlarged" self-employment sector becomes a dominant feature in numerous branches: commerce, bars and restaurants, private transportation (like Pony Express net), services provided to individuals, building, maintenance, mechanical work-shops, and within manufacturing: furniture, textile-clothing, food industry, footwear, and so on.

In Italy the expansion of self-employment, and of independent workers of the "second generation", as we described in the introduction, has proceeded together with a decline in "mass production-dependent work".

A third group of workers has emerged, a mixed form between self-employment and wage employment. This new type of work has been defined as "a-typical work" (it has to be noted that in Italy this is regulated by a specific contract "contratti di collaborazione coordinata e continuativa"). This kind of work has been called "a-typical" because, while very often the tasks assigned are externally determined, always with severe prescription (in a similar way to the old form of wage employment), the contract that regulates the transaction is managed under private law, and obviously by the market (as in the self-employment case). Between firm owners and employees we can now find in Italy a *continuum* of organisational situations, professionals that are quasi-employed, part-time collaborators, and autonomous subcontractors bound with "cut-throat prices" with a final client firm.

All these economic agents operate with mixed forms of entrepreneurial autonomy and market freedom, which render any classification troublesome.

For instance, today, as discussed by the lawyer Bronzini (1997), in a typical firm we can commonly find very different contractual arrangements for the same type of task. In the following sequence the same job can be performed by: a full-time stable worker (salaried employees, with a life-time contract), a part-time stable worker (salaried employees, with a life-time time contract), a full-time temporarily employed worker (salaried employees, with a short-term contract), a part-time temporary employed worker (salaried employees, with short-term contract), "interinali" workers (provided to the firm by agencies that provide occasional work), full-time or part-time wage workers, bound to external subcontracting firms (generally with a lower salary, in comparison to the internal workers), consultants or professionals, external collaborators with *Partita IVA* (the Italian VAT) , "contratti di collaborazione coordinata e continuativa" workers (with contracts implying long-term involvement and lower than professional schemes of payment), artisans (or subcontractors) who are physically not present in the firm but who work on orders in their own work-shop (paid in relation to the task performed). Clearly, all this overlapping is a little bit confusing. And, notably, only the first category corresponds to the traditional mass-production worker who was the dominant social figure in the past.

Ricci's (1997) stimulating empirical research, based on fiscal data, allows us, tentatively, to measure the share of these forms of "a-typical work". First of all, there is to note that the fiscal entrepreneurial positions<sup>14</sup> (3,103,539), as we can see by comparing Tab. 6 and 3, are far less numerous than those based on Istat data (also excluding co-operative workers and working family members, thus 4,699,000 units). In fact, large tax evasion is endemic<sup>15</sup> in the Italian economy. The Ministry of Finance, has recently hypothesised an underestimation of GNP of between 20% and 30% (see also the annual report of the Bank of Italy, 1998) Secondly, we can observe that the weight of two categories "a-typical workers/self-employed" and "occasional workers" reach nearly 1.5 million of the active working population. Comparing the revenue declared by a-typical "workers/self-employed" and by

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<sup>14</sup> Legal entrepreneurs are here defined by the civil code as those who exercise their activity in a firm (thus we find here all entrepreneurs and all artisans who own a firm and who are included in the "Chamber of Commerce Company Register", while the other self-employed can exercise their activity without being organised as a firm (autonomous workers, like: plumbers, private teachers, or professionals).

<sup>15</sup> This does not seem to be the Italian case at all. See, for instance Linder (1992) and Danesh (1991).



the category of “traditional artisans and independent professionals”<sup>16</sup> (Tab. 7), we can easily see the wide range of incomes declared in both cases. This is the spectrum of a large variety of working conditions and professional statuses which characterise the typical post-modern worker (or post-Fordist). In particular, about 30% of Italian a-typical workers declared in 1992 an income of less than 5 million lire (about \$ 3000 US), and half of them earned in the same year less than 20 million (about \$ 11.100 US)<sup>17</sup>. Thus, in Italy, we are experiencing the emergence of the category of working-poor (independent self-employed).

Interestingly enough, the a-typical worker is not the professional figure that characterised some backward areas in the south of Italy. On the contrary (Tab. 8), they are mainly located in well developed areas of Lombardy, Emilia Romagna, Veneto, and Lazio. We can, thus, infer that this type of collaboration is found in tertiary activities (led by government outsourcing or by services demanded by manufacturing firms), and in the areas of the development of small manufacturing firms (in the North East of Italy).

From the analysis conducted so far, results emerge that can be examined and further elaborated:

- In recent years, many empirical works analysing the Italian labour market have shown an increasing level of flexibility (through the entry and exit of firms, and consequently labour), and dynamism, related to industrial restructuring (with the increase of outsourcing, with the implementation of flexible organisation, and flexible work procedures, including *just-in-time* methods).
- The labour market has been moderately deregulated (reducing entry cost<sup>18</sup>, and new regulations which have rendered the modalities of hiring more flexible). However, the Italian labour market is still facing a dual situation. Within the same country, there are more “rigid” but rich areas (e.g.: developed regions of North and North East) where trade union power is strong, and local administrations interfere positively with the production environment (with restrictions about pollution, provision of services directed to small firms, organisation of industrial estates, and so on), and more “flexible” but poor areas (e.g.: backward areas of Mezzogiorno with high levels of unemployment), where regulative power is low: labour laws (or national contracts) are typically never observed, working conditions are difficult, and many firms belong to the informal and irregular sector. In addition, local institutions are here far more inefficient, and the management of *res publica* is penalised by the prevailing individualistic ethic (Banfield-

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<sup>16</sup> From a fiscal point of view these two categories have very different regulations: the former determine their (gross) taxable revenue from the difference between fees and expenditures (many have a pension fund, provided by their professional association, and these costs are charged to the buyers), while for the latter there is a fixed discount on the revenue (10% in the past, and now 5%). Recently, a fixed contribution of 10% has been introduced, payable to INPS (2/3 paid by buyers), for financing the social welfare and the health system. In 1997, “10%” workers, as the Italian press called them, in the newly coined definition, have reached nearly 1 million (Rassegna Sindacale, 1998).

<sup>17</sup> The income ranking may be explained by the different professions that are included here. The highest earnings belong to company administrators, lawyers, dentists, and so on. On the contrary, the lowest earnings belong to those who work occasionally or for reduced hours in industry and services (Ricci, 1997).

<sup>18</sup> However, dismissals from firms with more than 15 employees are still tightly regulated by the Statuto dei Lavoratori, which allows dismissals only for *justa causa* (a reduction in employment levels because market crisis, or proved frauds).

Putnam's dilemma of "immoral familism" and absence of civic values). In Italy, in other words, labour market "flexibility", meaning total labour market de-regulation, is not emerging as a determinant factor of growth and wealth, as institutional economists would have forecast.

- Among the main sources of inflexibility, which impedes the free movement of factors within and between regions, we have to mention the following topics: capital supply (capital is rigid and it is concentrated in developed areas) and public regulations (in Italy it has been calculated that about 150,000 laws are in force).
- In this context, self-employment in Italy has shown extraordinary resilience, for all of the 1980s and 1990s it remained at very high levels (if measured against total working population), and even tended to expand, especially in building and manufacturing, and in the service sectors.

Reflection on the nature and characterisation of the self-employed has led us to elaborate a new category, based on Italian debates, and to introduce the figure of the autonomous worker of the "second generation", a mixed category located in a grey area between entrepreneurs (self-employed) and wage employees.

### **3. An overview of the policy framework**

In many Western countries, it was concern about high unemployment levels (Audretsch and Jin, 1994; Loutfi, 1991; Meager, 1994; Schmid, 1994; Dennis, 1996; Runner, 1996<sup>19</sup>) that led to increasing attention to self-employment, which is perceived as a powerful tool for putting people back to work. Accordingly, policies to stimulate firm start-ups were advocated. This was not the case in Italy, where the importance of developing small firms was deeply rooted with both politicians and policy-makers (Bagnasco and Trigilia, 1984 and 1985).

The policy framework in Italy has always been very favourable to artisan production and self-employment (Bartolozzi, 1993; Lazerson, 1995)). In fact, the Italian model is mainly based on a kind of "micro-capitalism" (Weiss, 1982), where the presence of large enterprises was no more than tolerated (at least in the past). In the post-war years, all political forces encouraged self-employment by protecting the commercial sector from the "in-roads" by the large-scale distribution (only recently, in a more European atmosphere, unfair regulations and restrictions have been abandoned); by assisting agriculture (and farmers) through the provision of subsidies, exemption from taxes, welfare, and pensions payments at practically no cost; and stimulating the perpetual start up of small firms through a specific legislation for artisans.

Curiously, in Italy, for different ideological reasons, both the Right (Christian Democratic Party) and the Left (Socialist Party and Italian Communist Party), agreed to policies favouring an economic model centred on small-scale private initiative.

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<sup>19</sup> For instance, in 1995, 19 States in the United States amended their legislation (unemployment insurance law) to require that, as a condition for eligibility for benefits, an individual must participate in reemployment services, such as job search assistance, and many states established self-employment assistance programmes, in which selected claimants may continue to receive periodic unemployment payments while engaged full time in establishing a business.

A strong "anticapitalistic" position, moved the Left (for instance in Emilia Romagna<sup>20</sup>), to "defend" small entrepreneurs from inroads by the oligopolistic power of the dominant large scale firms. So, they tried to create local structures of services (in order to compensate for the economic weakness of small firms), consortia, and business associations (Scarpitti, 1991). They promoted inter-firm co-operation, and high quality training for manual workers (setting up technical schools, like Aldini Valeriani in Bologna). They also encouraged the direct intervention of local administrations (see the work of Bellini, Giordani, Magatti, and Pasquini, in Nomisma, 1991) to provide industrial estates (aree attrezzate artigianali). The Left strongly promoted social mobility and a social model in which industrial power was fragmented and democratically shared by many (Bartolozzi and Garibaldi, 1995). Also the way in which, at the local level, trade unions dealt with entrepreneurs using their conflictual-but-collaborative bargaining power helped to establish a "democracy of producers" (Trentin, 1969).

The rationale of the Christian Democratic Party was to use public resources as means to promote the concept of private property, and, by this, to create a bulwark against the penetration of the Left ideology. The middle class was the basis of their electorate, so they did not try to accelerate the process of economic modernisation. The positive side of this story<sup>21</sup> is found, above all, in the complex legislation created for the artisan sector (financial support for investment, start-up credits, and the setting up of local banks, some of them belonging to the co-operative movement, which, in turn, was strongly subsidised with tax exemptions<sup>22</sup>).

As is well known, the development of self-employment in Italy is strongly connected with the legal concept of artisan production. This has been regulated in Italy by law 860/1956 (subsequently modified and extended by law 443/1985), where a legal status is assigned to the artisan entrepreneur, in relation to:

- his (or her) personal involvement in the activity of the firm,
- the type of activity performed,
- some limitations on the firm size (in the case of mass production units no more than nine employees are allowed, and for the other activities, based on limited batch production, the maximum is 18 employees).

A significant part of the legislation promoting industry, in Italy, has been directed to the sector of small firms (Weiss, 1988; Tolomelli, 1992).

The efforts to support the artisan (and SME) system included:

- a separate line of credit access
- less severe labour regulations (The "Statuto dei Lavoratori" is not applicable to firms with less than 15 employees, so in the artisan sectors dismissals are not legally contestable by those who have lost a job),

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<sup>20</sup> On this topic see: Cooke (1994), and Cossentino, Pyke, and Sengenberger, 1996.

<sup>21</sup> Perhaps the negative side is Italy's accumulation of an enormous Public Debt (122% of the GDP)!

<sup>22</sup> On this topic see the accurate work of Freshi (1994).

- a marked reduction of labour costs (we must stress two aspects: for artisan firms, labour costs, which depend on national bargaining between trade unions and artisan associations, are lower for artisan workers than in the industrial sector<sup>23</sup>; plus, the artisan sector benefits from lower social contributions due to earlier national legislation),
- the hiring of apprentices is regulated by the 1984 law on "Contratti di formazione lavoro", that reduced by more than half the cost of an hour of work for wage employment (note that during the first years of employment, social contributions for pensions and health are "only virtually" paid by the employer).

Actually the artisan sector is becoming a less homogeneous social category. For instance, according to Anastasia and Guerra (1997), who have analysed the artisan structure in the Veneto region, there is a great diversity among the various firms. Some (about 1/3 of all artisan firms) are truly managed by individuals working on their own. They are called "individual artisans"<sup>24</sup> (with no employees). Others (2/3) belong to the category of small businesses. The latter are managed by small entrepreneurs (with 10-15 employees on average). Anastasia and Guerra concluded on the basis of their study that there is not much difference between these artisan firms and SMEs. The big difference among these firms is related to their market autonomy. Some artisans have an autonomous market. Here, the most competitive firms can become larger in size. Others may be described simply as dependent and weak subcontractors, which operate only as a "separate department" of the client firm. They have very few chances of becoming larger structures, being penalised by low levels of profitability. These self-employers would be better defined as "foreman" more than true entrepreneurs. However, this type of dependent "industrial" artisan may run very efficient firms, if inserted in dynamic networks (as has been in the case in the Italian clothing-textile industry<sup>25</sup>, or engineering subcontracting in Emilia Romagna<sup>26</sup>). On the other hand, subcontracting firms may evolve, developing internal product design capability, to conquer autonomous final markets, as has occurred in many Italian industrial districts. A last category, highlighted by both Anastasia and Guerra, and Rullani (1997) is "marginal" self-employment, which finds the basis of its existence in the under-remuneration of inputs. As we noted, in section 2, within the Italian economy, this component is quite widespread.

Some concluding remarks can now be made.

The present situation appears to be quite favourable to the sustainable development of self-employment in Italy.

At the centre of this process we find a revolutionary transformation of the nature of work towards new forms of empowerment of labour enriching human capital, based on relational aspects and on a better and more collective use of knowledge (network-specific). The Italian case brings both good news and bad news in this regard. In relation to policy, some important recommendations may

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<sup>23</sup> Labour costs are also lower because there is no "contrattazione aziendale" (firm level bargaining).

<sup>24</sup> What differentiates it from the industrial mode of production is in the nature of the product, it is unique and personalised to the need of clients. Its uniqueness is its artistic nature (see glass production, jewellery, and so on).

<sup>25</sup> See for instance, the Benetton example, or, more generally, the whole Italian clothing-textile industry (cfr. Belussi, 1997).

<sup>26</sup> See the complex matrix of small firm development in the Emilia Romagna case, analysed by Bertini (1998).

emerge from the analysis of the Italian case. The essence of our discussion is that the implementation of self-employment policies must be forward-looking, and force the unavoidable "entrepreneurialisation of dependent employment". So, the development of self-employment must not be conceived as a step backward, a bitter medicine that countries with high unemployment levels must swallow (with the risk of a general lowering of salaries, a regression in working conditions, and social protections: pensions, health care, and so on), but as a way to add more economic freedom, initiative, skills, creativity, and knowledge.

However, only a new law<sup>27</sup> on self-employment (and autonomous work) may create a framework of guarantees which ought to be found within new post-Fordist regulative culture (more sensitive to the empowerment of labour). Then, the right balance needs to be created between:

- risk-taking initiatives and social protection,
- the sponsoring of individual small firms, and the necessity, given the collective nature of economic progress, to regulate the outcome of productivity of the whole economy (see, for instance, the heated European debate on the 35 hour week),
- the investment in human capital realised in self-employment structures (within the circuits of knowledge, innovation diffusion, experimentation, and training paid for by individuals) and the squeezing of earnings due to the severe market discipline (where competition may bring down profits to almost-zero).

#### **4. Support programmes for self-employment**

Italy represents a paradigmatic case where the behaviour of institutions has strongly influenced the development of SMEs and various related forms of self-employment. Their interventions have been planned especially at local level (Nomisma, 1991), and, above all, at regional<sup>28</sup> level, with the activation of regional public structures and regional credit consortia (Finanziarie regionali), like Ervet, in Emilia Romagna, or Friulia, in Friuli Venezia Giulia, or Veneto Sviluppo, in the Veneto region. These above-mentioned regional institutions operate either directly, or on a more indirect level, providing the necessary guarantee schema to industrial associations (which, in turn, offer discounted interest rates to their members). Initially, these programmes began quite spontaneously, then a more conscious attitude has prevailed. The idea behind the implementation of Italian programmes has not been to target a particular cluster of firms, or to select a specific group of potential entrepreneurs, but to lower entry barriers generally by providing credit and insurance for

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<sup>27</sup> Within the Italian experience this means: a) a new reflection about a universal "charter of rights" for the various forms of autonomous workers (Bologna and Fumagalli, 1997), and b) a better regulation of subcontracting practices.

<sup>28</sup> There is then to consider the national legislation for innovation diffusion: L.46 (1982, and new re-financing) law for the support of R&D projects, L. 696 (1983, and new re-financing) known as Sabbatini law, for the adoption of automated technologies in manufacturing, and the L. 317 (1991) law on industrial districts, for the financing of export consortia, internationalisation of SMEs, incentives to the acquisition of advanced services, and tax exemption for R&D projects. Its success with entrepreneurs has been so extraordinary that, notably, the sum available in 1991 (313 billion lire) for technological investment (article n° 5), were exhausted by processing the applications which arrived on the first day (Viola, 1996). The funds for re-financing were not enough to meet the demand (more than 20,000 applications were presented).

new start-ups (in order to cover start-up capital and other costs<sup>29</sup>). These policies of enterprise creation were conceived of (Tolomelli, 1992; Bertini, 1998) as competition policies, and in fact, they have forced fierce competition among small firms in the North East of Italy and faster rates of technology adoption (Belussi, 1988).

In the middle of the 1980s two laws of the Italian Parliament were of particular interest, as regards the support of entrepreneurship and self-employment in the South of Italy: the promotion of co-operatives, L. 49 (1985), known as the Marcora law<sup>30</sup>, and L. 44<sup>31</sup> (1986), called the De Vito law, focused especially on assistance to new young entrepreneurs.

These initiatives represent, to our knowledge, the first attempt to strategically link start-up policies for self-employment, and unemployment policies.

These experiments were launched in Italy a decade before the revolution that took place in welfare policies, both in Great Britain, and during the Clinton presidency, in the United States.

In about 10 years, 5,000 projects have been approved and 1,000 financed (with the creation of about 20,000 jobs). The agency running the programmes, received, in these years a dowry of about 4,000 billion lire in public funds (of which about 3,000 were directly invested in the projects). A phase of tutoring was included with the incentives. They could cover up to 90% of the planned start-up costs: 60% of the capital costs were provided as a non reimbursable sum, and the remaining 30% were provided as a loan at a discounted interest rate. The evaluation of the results has been generally positive, but the survival rate of the firms, once the public subsidies ended, did not show a marked difference from average survival rates (Battistini, 1997). In any case, the central role played by tutoring has improved the managerial skills of the new entrepreneurs. One limit may be due to the fact that the supporting agency does not only play the role of "service-consultant" but also has the complex duty of providing (and disbursing) the financial support. This agency is planned to be regionalised in future.

To adequately interpret the Italian case, it is necessary to insert support programmes for self-employment in a wider context. First, we can draw a general distinction between three different types of intervention, even if these aspects are closely related: 1) passive labour market policies; 2) policies for the consolidation of the economic system and incentives for the absorption of new workers (or unemployed workers), and 3) active "supply" policies for new firm start-ups, support programmes for self-employment and for the retraining of the labour-force. Analysing the most recent programme in which the major sectors of action are listed (see Tab. 9): we can calculate that the total cost of all these measures at the end of 1998 as reaching about 1.8% of Italian GNP<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> It has been widely recognised that financial factors represent the main disadvantage of new firms in regard to incumbents. New firms bear hidden (sunk) costs, and the failure rate is highest above all in the first three years of life (Vivarelli, 1994).

<sup>30</sup> For 1987-90 about 52 co-operatives were supported (employing about 5,000 people with a total cost of 127 billion lire (Manfra and Zevi, 1993).

<sup>31</sup> In 1995 the application of this law has been extended to some areas of North Italy, characterised by industrial decline (inserted in the 2 and 5b target of EU).

<sup>32</sup> Here some expenditures performed at local level are not calculated.

Some aspects of Italian policies can be considered very innovative: "passive intervention policies" will absorb nearly half of the available funds in 1998. And active intervention will be limited to no more than 10% of available funds.

In recent years, in Italy, efforts for the promotion of self-employment have been directed particularly towards the less developed areas of the South, where unemployment rates are between 20-25% of the entire labour force. Another interesting new initiative is the "prestito d'onore" law. In 1998, 180 billion lire have been allocated to this project. This specific self-employment programme targeted to young unemployed has just begun. In contrast with law L. 44, subsidies are not given once and for all. Funds are only lent by the State, based on the quality of a business plan, and its probability of success. At the regional level some training will be provided to the new entrepreneurs, before they start their venture.

Other important projects deal with the issue of local development in underdeveloped areas of the Mezzogiorno (Patti territoriali and contratti d'area). Often these projects include specific assistance for self-employment. They are organised using a bottom-up approach, and the main aim is the implementation of specific development projects, based on the consent and the active co-operation of all local agents. Three contracts were signed in 1997, with Manfredonia (Puglia), Crotona (Calabria), and Catania (Sicily)<sup>33</sup>. Other newly launched programmes have tried to enlarge new entrepreneurial initiatives, explicitly structuring "partnerships" and co-operation between entrepreneurs located in Northern regions and entrepreneurs (and potential entrepreneurs) located in backward areas of the South. These programmes are generally supported by regional institutions and local agencies (for instance the agreement signed between Emilia Romagna and Basilicata).

## 5. Final considerations

1. In this paper we have argued that self-employment is an important (and permanent) characteristic of the Italian labour market. Depending on the conceptual definition and empirical source utilised, we have argued that it constitutes between 30% and 40% of the total labour force (the latter is more appropriate if we include "marginal self-employment", and occasional non wage workers). Moreover, in the last decade, following the wider international trend, its weight has grown in the whole Italian economy, both in services, and in industry.

2. We have, tentatively, tried to disentangle its various components or "categories", which are not just related to levels of income, but to the specific characteristics of the activity performed, and to legal contexts surrounding the economic transaction. So, the vast area of social labour regulation has been briefly introduced. To better fit the Italian case, we have proposed the notion of "self-employed of the second generation", a kind of mixed category, placed in between pure entrepreneurial functions and the highly prescriptive tasks typical of wage workers. Our survey of many empirical studies, in particular within the peculiar Italian industrial structures of the so called "industrial districts", suggests a further division of self-employment in three main groups:

- "traditional", based on artistic/professional competence (it is the old form of medieval "artisan workshop", and includes the professional activity of lawyers, dentists) etc.,
- "industrial" (typically organised in industrial subcontracting networks),

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<sup>33</sup>12 Patti territoriali were approved in 1998 by the Italian Cipe for 2,000 new employees.

- "marginal"<sup>34</sup> (based on cost advantage extracted from black market exploitation, from self-exploitation, or temporary services; this category is frequent in some industrially underdeveloped areas of Italy (informal industrial sector), and significant in some new activities of the service sector (like: Pony-Express, McDonald's labour, and so on).

3. In contrast to the spread of an approach which sees self-employment as a bitter medicine to cure unemployment, we have proposed a new interpretation for its development. The growth of self-employment may be seen as a radical disruption of the old Fordist regime of regulation, but they open up a wide range of possibilities for the "entrepreneurialisation" of work and self-empowerment, which pull and push towards a new post-Fordist "world of knowledge-intensive jobs". However, the development of self-employment *per-se* does not have a positive or negative meaning: the outcome of this very complex process depends, much more than in the past, upon non economic factors:

- the institutional context,
- the combined outcome of de- and re-regulative tension,
- the behaviour of social actors, and
- the socially embedded characteristics of the production systems (with levels of co-operation/conflict, the distribution of tacit/codified knowledge, and the extension of networks/common codes/metaorganisers-integration).

4. Much of the experience accumulated in industrial policy to promote self-employment in Italy refers to indirect policies, managed on the local or regional level, based on the two sides of the SME development coin: anti-rationing credit programmes<sup>35</sup> and provision of real services to SMEs. This should be understood as a policy recommendation for all OECD countries.

5. Numerous studies conducted at the international level have emphasised the core of the process of new firm creation: a cumulative spiral of new start ups is a result of the flight of skilled workers from wage labour: so new entrepreneurs come from the same sectors where the founder was employed (Garofoli, 1994; Acs, 1996). The start-up process tends to bring to life new specialised production systems, where knowledge and tacit skills are socially learned and shared among numerous agents. These systems tend to evolve dynamically and to reproduce themselves, and have a long term duration. Highly dynamic universities, or technologically advanced "mother" firms have the role of founders. Italian industrial districts are "incubators of entrepreneurship"(which emerged

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<sup>34</sup> In a recent work, CNEL's economists (CNEL, 1998) have estimated the number of irregular workers operating in the Italian economy: 5,030,000 individuals (3,000,000 full time and 2,000,000 part time), including 300,000 workers less than 14 years old, and 235,000 illegal immigrants.

<sup>35</sup> This is more than empirical regularity, see, for instance, the econometric work of Parker (1996), where he found strong evidence that a high interest rate acts as a barrier to entry reducing self-employment in the short run and the long run. Also Evans and Jovanovic (1987) underlined that, while individuals try riskier occupations only when they are young, and when they are young they have not accumulated the necessary capital, new entrepreneurs have difficulty in borrowing start-up funds. So markets do not provide adequate capital funds for new young entrepreneurs. This market failure is the rationale for various forms of government assistance programmes. In the same line of reasoning, Blanchflower and Oswald (1991) found that capital constraints play a significant role. The econometric estimates suggest that the probability of self-employment is dependent on whether the individual ever received a gift or inheritance.



naturally). In other words, for self-employment, it is easier "for the State to inhibit rather than to promote" (Loutfi, 1991).

6. Much of the flexibility of the Italian labour market has been provided through the means of the "adjustments at the margin" of the rate of variation of self-employment itself, at which a more efficient level of resources allocation has been obtained. Its development in Italy is still a little-known process of transformation of the "nature of work", where self-employment is going to be re-articulated in a global-local web of networks (see the evolution of network firms in manufacturing and services).

7. The short survey of the legislation related to self-employment has highlighted the novelties in the Italian industrial policy, with a passage from monetary incentives to individual firms to a more active intervention by public institutions. So "co-ordinated" and "systemic" actions in local economies are being implemented. They will be based on the mobilisation of social agents, more than targeted to single firms. The focus of these new policies is the core of public intervention in governing processes of collective learning, to stimulate inter-firm co-operation, to generate positive externalities, and to propagate knowledge from high-technology sectors to low-tech sectors.

8. In relation to self-employment, strictly speaking, we have discussed the practical application of several laws, particularly, L. 44 created to sponsor of new entrepreneurs in weak areas: about 1,000 projects have been financed<sup>36</sup>.

9. Not much literature has been found by the author on the subject of public policy evaluation. The problem of evaluation still remains an open question in Italy. To our knowledge a four step process of policy evaluation (with the analysis in four phases: policy implementation; ex-post evaluation; re-formulation of new policy on the basis of the outcomes of phase 2; implementation and subsequent re-evaluation) has never been systematically conducted. Policy-makers and Italian politicians do not seem to believe much in the use of "rational" criteria, in which sequential adjustments can emerge, with a more productive use of public resources. This appears to be the cutting edge of both advocated and desirable developments.

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<sup>36</sup> For a recent contribution see Corò and Rullani (1998)'s article.

**ANNEX 1**

**TABLES**

**Table 1**  
*Self-employment in Italy (000)*

	1980		1985		1990		1996	
<b>Italy</b>	A.V	%	A.V	%	A.V	%	A.V	%
<b>AGRICULTURE, HUNTING, FORESTRY AND FISHING</b>								
Wage earners and salaried employees	1.088	37.5	857	37.3	791	41.7	521	37.2
Employers and persons working on own account	1.380	47.6	1.098	47.8	908	47.9	697	49.8
Unpaid family workers	431	14.9	341	14.8	196	10.4	182	13.0
Total	2.899	100.0	2.296	100.0	1895	100.0	1.400	100.0
<b>MANUFACTURING AND SERVICES</b>								
Wage earners and salaried employees	13.414	77.0	13.561	74.5	14.342	74.2	13.729	73.7
Employers and persons working on own account	3.344	19.2	3.888	21.3	4.296	22.2	4.280	23.0
Unpaid family workers	656	3.8	763	4.2	682	3.6	627	3.3
Total	17.414	100.0	18.212	100.0	19.320	100.0	18.636	100.0
<b>TOTAL ECONOMY</b>								
Wage earners and salaried employees	14.499	71.4	14.418	70.3	15.133	71.3	14.250	71.1
Employers and persons working on own account	4.724	23.2	4986	24.3	5.204	24.5	4.977	24.8
Unpaid family workers	1.090	5.4	1.104	5.4	878	4.2	809	4.1
Total	20.313	100.0	20.508	100.0	21.215	100.0	20.036	100.0

Source: OECD Labour Statistics (1997), Paris

**Table 2**  
*Civil employment by professional status: Italy 1980 (000)*

<i>Professional status</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>		<i>Building and construction</i>		<i>Other sectors</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>AV</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>AV</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>AV</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>AV</i>	<i>%</i>
Entrepreneurs	43	0.8	56	2.7	57	0.4	156	0.7
Professional workers	21	0.4	28	1.4	263	2.0	312	1.5
Autonomous	462	8.4	285	13.8	3.157	24.1	3.904	18.9
Co-operative workers	41	0.7	25	1.2	1040	7.9	1.046	5.1
Working family members	92	1.7	21	1.0	74	0.6	339	1.9
<b>1. Self-employed</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>5.302</b>	<b>40.4</b>	<b>5.777</b>	<b>28.0</b>
<b>2. Employees</b>	<b>4.803</b>	<b>87.9</b>	<b>1.645</b>	<b>79.9</b>	<b>9.099</b>	<b>69.6</b>	<b>14.827</b>	<b>72.0</b>
<b>3. Total</b>	<b>5.463</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2.060</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13.081</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20.604</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3***Civil employment by professional status: Italy 1995 (000)*

<i>Professional status</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>		<i>Building and construction</i>		<i>Other sectors</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>AV</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>AV</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>AV</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>AV</i>	<i>%</i>
Entrepreneurs	100	2.2	73	4.5	194	1.4	367	1.8
Professional workers	30	0.6	55	3.4	626	4.5	711	3.6
Autonomous	344	7.4	413	25.6	2.859	20.8	3.616	18.1
Co-operative workers	39	0.8	17	1.0	172	1.3	228	1.1
Working family members	74	1.6	40	2.5	736	5.3	850	4.2
<b>1. Self-employed</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>4585</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>5.770</b>	<b>28.8</b>
<b>2. Employees</b>	<b>4.036</b>	<b>87.3</b>	<b>1.017</b>	<b>63.0</b>	<b>9.186</b>	<b>66.7</b>	<b>14.239</b>	<b>71.2</b>
<b>3. Total</b>	<b>4.623</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1.615</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13.771</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20.009</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: our elaboration on Istat and Rapiti (1997)*

**Table 4***Estimation of self-employment and wage employment flows from self-employment to other categories*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Wage sectors</i>	<i>Unemployment</i>	<i>Non -labour force</i>	<i>Remaining in self-employment</i>
1979-80	8.7	0.7	9.4	81.2
1984-85	8.7	0.9	10.2	80..2
1989-90	9.4	1.0	6.9	82.6

*From wage sectors to other categories*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Self-employment</i>	<i>Unemployment</i>	<i>Non labour force</i>	<i>Remaining in wage sectors</i>
1979-80	4.4	1.5	5.8	88.3
1984-85	4.1	2.0	5.4	88.5
1989-90	4.2	1.7	4.3	89.8

*Entry flows into self-employment*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Wage sectors</i>	<i>Unemployment</i>	<i>Non labour force</i>	<i>Remaining in self-employment</i>
1979-80	10.9	1.2	10.3	77.6
1984-85	9.8	1.6	7.4	801.2
1989-90	10.2	1.7	6.3	818

*Entry flows into wage sectors*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Self-employment</i>	<i>Unemployment</i>	<i>Non labour force</i>	<i>Remaining in wage sectors</i>
1979-80	3.4	3.2	6.2	87.2
1984-85	3.7	3.8	5.1	87.4
1989-90	3.5	3.7	5.5	87.3

*Source:* our elaboration on Istat and Rapiti (1997)

**Table 5***Percentage of switches from wage to self-employment on the basis of INPS data*

	%
<b>Sectors</b>	
Manufacturing	0.43
Energy	0.00
Building	0.39
Commerce	0.47
Services	0.26
<b>Sex</b>	
Women	0.27
Men	0.45
<b>Type of previous job</b>	
Blue-collar worker	8.80
Clerk	10.60
Manager	7.10
<b>Age</b>	
<21	0.35
21-25	0.55
26-30	0.46
31-35	0.35
36-45	0.31
46-55	0.20
>55	0.13
<b>Firm size</b>	
< 20	0.47
20-199	0.32
200-1000	0.18
> 1000	0.20
<b>Location</b>	
North-west	0.45
North-east	0.48
Centre of Italy	0.36
Mezzogiorno	0.24

*Source: Rapiti (1997)*



**Table. 6***Estimation of self-employment sub-categories, using Ministry of Finance data (tax form: IRPEF)*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total self-employment</i>	<i>Entrepreneurs</i>	<i>Professionals and Artisans</i>	<i>Atypical workers</i>	<i>Occasional workers</i>
1988	4.171.219	2.651.504	640.937	572.105	306.673
1989	n.c	n.c	647.529	631.934	357.382
1990	4.352.069	2.573.178	671.823	697.685	409.383
1991	4.416.394	2.563.082	656.970	743.254	453.088
1992	4.355.335	2.493.676	609.863	767.481	484.315

*Sources: our elaboration on Ministry of Finance data and on Ricci (1997)***Table 7***Location of traditional self-employment (column 3 of Table 6) and atypical workers (columns 4 and 5)*

	<i>Traditional</i>	<i>Atypical</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Lombardy	18.0	27.0
Lazio	13.0	12.0
Emilia Romagna	8.0	11.0
Veneto	7.0	10.0
Sicily	7.0	3.5
Campania	9.0	3.0

**Table 8**  
*Income levels of traditional and atypical self-employed*

<i>Millions of lira</i>	<i>Traditional</i>	<i>Atypical</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
< 5	15.8	31.0
5-10	9.8	13.9
10-20	17.5	9.8
20-30	15.5	7.9
30-40	11.1	11.5
40-50	7.1	7.2
50-70	8.4	10.7
> 70	14.9	7.8

*Source: Ricci (1997)*

**Table 9**

*Estimation of financial support for programmes related to labour market  
(Government expenditures on GNP -1998)*

<b>Passive policies (income support)</b>	<b>billions of lire</b>
1. Cig ordinaria (firm crisis)	950
2. Cig straordinaria e solidarietà (industry crises)	1.124
3. Cig agriculture	19
4. Unemployment benefits	7.741
5. Mobility benefits	2.761
6. Incentives for retirement	3.798
7. Services work	1.600
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>17.993</b>
<b>Policies related to industrial consolidation and incentives for the absorption of new employment</b>	
8. Apprenticeship and CFL	3.765
9. Fiscal exemption (South Italy)	3.242
10. 236, 431 law Fondo sviluppo	110
11. Incentives for hiring unemployed workers (see point 2)	1.338
12. Contratti d'area e patti territoriali (local development in southern regions)	1.500
13. Training, assistance for territorial mobility, new services work	1.180
14. Other	3.271
15. 35 hour week and bargaining	860
16. Shifts of researchers from University to SME	15
<b>Sub- total</b>	<b>14.281</b>
<b>Self-employment and re-training</b>	
Training performed at regional level	2.800
L.44 - Young entrepreneurialship	300
Incentives to self-employment (prestito d'onore)	180
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>3.280</b>
<b>Organisational costs of public administration</b>	<b>1.200</b>
<b>TOTAL</b> <b>(% GNP)</b>	<b>36.754</b> <b>(1.8%)</b>

Source: our elaboration based on DPEF and on Forlani (1998)

## **ANNEX II**

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