



Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia
Dipartimento di Economia Politica



Materiali di discussione

\\ 566 \\

Industrial Policy and Artisan Firms in Italy 1945-1971

by

Giuseppe Maria Longoni*
Alberto Rinaldi**

September 2007

*
Università degli Studi di Milano
Dipartimento di Storia della Società e delle Istituzioni
Via Livorno, 1
20122 Milano (Italy)
e-mail: giuseppe.longoni@unimi.it

**
Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia
Dipartimento di Economia Politica
Via Berengario, 51
41100 Modena, Italy
e-mail: alberto.rinaldi@unimore.it



Introduction¹

One of the main differences between Italy and the other major industrial countries concerns the average size of firms. In the 1990s a remarkable 58% of employees in the Italian manufacturing sector worked in companies with fewer than 50 employees – and 26% were employed in micro-firms with fewer than 10 employees. In contrast, the corresponding figures were only 18% and 4% in the US, 20% and 6% in the UK, 12% and 5% in Germany, 31% and 5% in France, and 47% and 18% in Japan (Giannetti and Vasta, 2005).

Some economists identify the underlying reason for the prominent role played by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Italy as the 'surprises' of the 1970s when, with the crisis of Fordism and mass production, manufacturing decentralisation and the growth of industrial districts, the industrialisation process started to spread from the northwest towards the northeastern and central and regions (NECRs) of the country (Brusco and Paba, 1997; Bellandi, 1999; Bianco, 2003). In the view of De Cecco (2001), the rise of SMEs was due to the devaluation of the Lira and the difficult trade union relations in the large factories of the Northwest, which, in the 1970s, led to radical organisational restructuring of Italian industry, with manufacturing decentralisation and the transfer of a large number of activities to small subcontractor firms located primarily in the NECRs. This process was supported by the 1970 Charter of Workers' Rights which, exempting companies with less than 16 employees from the ban on dismissals without just cause, created a powerful incentive for the development of SMEs.

Historical research, on the other hand, seeks the long-term roots of the predominance of SMEs in Italy. Cafagna (1989) and Federico (1994) stress the historically dualistic nature of Italian industry, emphasising the dynamic role of the small company in traditional sectors, demonstrating their ability to exploit the comparative advantage of a country with very ready access to labour. These authors underscore the ability of small companies to maintain their competitive advantage without requiring any form of state intervention, while major companies operating in oligopolistic sectors with high capital intensity were able to survive only thanks to the state subsidies.

The dualistic vision that highlights the existence of two separate components in the industrial structure of the country has recently been the subject of criticism. Thus Colli (2002) and Bolchini (2003) argue that the small company was a key protagonist of the entire economic history of the country and they stress the complementary aspects and interrelations that developed between

¹ This work has been funded by the the Miur Prin-Cofin research programme n. 2004134099 – coordinator Franco Amatori. Previous versions of this paper have been presented at the workshop 'Modelli di impresa nel capitalismo industriale italiano del Novecento' (Milan, 14-15 June 2007) and at the ABH and CHORD Conference 'Business Links: Trade, Distribution and Networks' (Wolverhampton, UK, 29-30 June 2007).

large and small enterprises, with consequent benefits for the overall flexibility and efficiency of the system.

The revision of the role of SMEs in the Italian economic development has led also to a review of the role of the state. If government policies for SMEs were, in the view of Becattini (1998), either non-existent or anyway insufficient with respect to those adopted for large companies, Weiss (1988) and Spadavecchia (2005) argued that the Italian State played a central role in fostering post WW2 advancement of SMEs. Other scholars (Piore and Sabel, 1984; Arrighetti and Seravalli, 1997) in their turn held that regional and local institutions, rather than the central government, were relevant to the development of Italian SMEs.

This paper focuses on government for artisanship (that is, for the smallest firms) from 1945 to 1971. We end our survey with the year 1971 as in January 1972 a law transferred most competencies on artisan policy from the central government to the newly constituted regional governments, thereby marking a major institutional break.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 1 contains various quantitative data concerning the extension of artisan enterprise in Italy between 1937 and 1971; sections 2 and 3 examine artisan associations and their demands; section 4 addresses the role of small companies in the thinking of the two main Italian political parties in the Post War period: the Christian democrat party (Dc) and the Italian communist party (Pci); section 5 investigates the initial measures adopted to aid artisan firms in the years immediately after WWII; section 6 deals with the ‘Artisan Act’ of 1956, which defines the legal framework of artisan firms in Italy; sections 7 to 11 discuss policies adopted in relation to artisan firms after approval of the ‘Artisan Act’. Finally, several closing remarks are given in section 12.

1. Quantitative data on artisan enterprises

The industrial census of 1937-39 revealed the presence of 815,438 artisan firms in Italy, with 1,243,407 employees (Table 1), analysed on the basis of the list of professions established by a law passed in 1934. Artisan firms accounted for 25.6% of the total number of employees recorded by the census. Artisan firms were prevalent in the sectors of sanitation services (84.1% of employees in the sector), apparel and fashion wear (79.7% of employees), tanning, leather and footwear (67.9% of employees) and wood and furniture (63.5% of employees).

The next census, conducted in 1951, defined artisan firms as ‘enterprises – normally one-man businesses – having a single local facility, engaged in the production of capital goods or the

provision of common or artistic services, also of a tangible nature, whose proprietor is continuously engaged in the work process or, if relevant, in the training of apprentices, with or without the assistance of family members and/or other persons'. This definition made it impossible to make a distinction between artisan firms and micro-firms, in which, as in artisan firms, the proprietor works as described above, because there was no mention of the capital employed, the type of manufacturing work carried out (series production or limited runs), and the degree of dependence on customers (Zamagni, 1979). The number of firms had fallen to 650,706 (-20.2%) while the number of employees was down to 1,026,025 (-17.5%), while the percentage of employees in artisan firms in respect of the total number of employees recorded by the census had dropped to 21.9%.

The difficulties encountered in recording artisan firms were not overcome even in the subsequent censuses of 1961 and 1971. In 1961 a total of 746,246 firms were recorded out of the 916,912 firms enrolled at the end of the year in the provincial registers created at the Chambers of Commerce (Table 2), while in 1971, with 877,422 firms recorded in the census, the total number of firms enrolled in the provincial registers was 1,231,525².

In any event, the period 1951-71 saw a significant expansion of artisan firms: according to census data, the number of concerns had grown by 35% and the number of employees by 97%, from 1,026,025 to 2,016,743.

Certain sectors, such as textiles, mechanical engineering, metallurgy, processing of non-metal minerals, paper and printing, building construction and sanitation services were particularly dynamic during the entire twenty-year period under consideration. Others, including food sector, wood and furniture, apparel / fashion wear, and chemicals and rubber displayed growth from 1951 to 1961 followed by a period of decline during the next decade, while the tanning, leather and footwear sector reflected a constant decline over the entire twenty-year period.

Notably, the vigorous growth of the mechanical engineering sector led to the rampant propagation of small artisan concerns engaged in the production of parts and components, the execution of contract machining work, and the repair and maintenance of durable consumer goods, such as motor vehicles, which had become very widespread throughout Italy during the 1950s and 1960s. Therefore, competition in this sector between large industrial corporations and small artisan firms was extremely limited – on the contrary: the significant development of the former served as a driving force for growth of the latter (Pescosolido, 1982).

² The lower number of artisans censused in relation to those registered with the Chambers of Commerce suggests the use of artisan classification for tax and social security benefits. Another reason for the difference between census data and those of the Chambers of Commerce is that many artisans worked at home, either for intermediaries or on a subcontracting basis. Being without business premises – the criterion of census taking – they therefore escaped tabulation (Barberis, 1980).

Overall, this period reflects a radical transformation of Italian artisan activities. On the one hand there was a significant downturn in traditional business activities (tailors, joiners, smiths, shoemakers), characterised by the production ‘by hand and made-to-measure’ of a range of goods that modern industry was able to provide at more competitive terms. On the other hand, a series of activities that were complementary to the operations of large industrial concerns emerged, in which scale economies were not significant – and in which modern and relatively sophisticated production equipment was within reach even of small firms – such as machining and subcontracting work in many areas of the mechanical engineering, apparel and fashion wear, and woodworking sectors, or the crafts industry, building construction, transport, repair services, and sanitation services, for which demand was soaring.

2. Artisan associations

Up to the middle of the 1920s Italian artisan firms relied on a very insubstantial organisation, structured around trade communities on a strictly local basis. It was not until 1926 that an independent national federation was created. On the basis of the Federation’s Charter, artisans were grouped into 42 craft trade communities and 26 usual trade communities, which were subsequently aggregated into 20 national arts (Zamagni, 1979).

The creation of corporations in 1934 was accompanied by a restructuring of the system of representation of economic interests into four primary categories: agriculture, industry, commerce, and financing & insurance. Against this background, the Federation of artisans was annexed to the Confindustria industrial federation (Maraffi, 1994).

The corporative system was abolished after the fall of the Fascist regime. The fascist union associations were eliminated and freedom of association was reintroduced. This allowed artisans to break away from Confindustria and set up their own independent organisations. Consequently four nationwide associations were set up in the period between the end of 1944 and the start of 1945. Attempts to create a single national organisation of Italian artisans were abandoned in 1946. In the second half of the same year there was a split that led to the emergence of two major category confederations: Confederazione Nazionale dell’Artigianato (Cna – national confederation of crafts and small and medium-sized enterprises), which was present almost exclusively in Northern Italy, and Confederazione Generale dell’Artigianato Italiano (Cgai – general confederation of Italian artisan firms), which was active primarily in the central and southern parts of the country (Pesole, 1997).

A split of the Cgai in 1948 led to the creation of a third organisation, Confederazione Italiana dell'Artigianato (Cia – Italian confederation of artisan firms), which also attracted the membership of several local associations that had severed their ties with Cna, while other local associations, including that of Milan, preferred to retain their independence. This state of affairs was accompanied by a barrage of reciprocal accusations: Cia was targeted because of its alliance with the Christian Democrat party, Cgai because of its alliance with Confindustria, and Cna because of its ties with left wing political parties. Cga and Cia merged in 1954, resulting in the creation of the Confederazione Generale Italiana dell'Artigianato (Cgia – Italian general confederation of artisan firms), which from that time on consolidated its status as the most representative trade organisation in Italy, although it proved unable to topple the supremacy of Cna in the country's traditionally left-wing stronghold regions (Simoncini, 1981).

Representation of Italian artisan firms was once again divided between two large confederations with opposing political and ideological bases, although the big two were soon to be joined by two smaller confederations, confirming the pluralistic nature of the trade representation system³.

The creation of separate and independent artisan organisations was due to two main motives. On the one hand, the specific nature of the interests to be represented, which were hard to reconcile with the interests of big industrial players, and on the other, the political vision of the two main Italian parties, the Dc and the Pci – and, although to a lesser extent, the Socialist and Social Democratic parties – which were keen to establish themselves as the popular parties of the new democratic political system, deeply rooted in the community and establishing solid ties with broad sectors of the middle classes. The nature of the interests at play justified the emergence of an artisan association that was independent from Confindustria, while the strategy of political parties explains the existence of several artisan associations in competition with each other (Maraffi, 1994).

3. Demands of artisans

In practical terms, the divergence between Cgia and Cna mainly concerned relations with trade unions. Cgia was in favour of contractual articulation down to the individual level, while Cna

³ These were Claai (Confederazione delle libere associazioni artigiane italiane - confederation of free Italian artisan associations), set up in Milan in 1954 by a group of local associations that had eschewed membership of any of the existing national confederations, and Casa (Confederazione artigiana sindacati autonomi – confederation of independent artisan associations), founded in 1958 by several associations having ties with the left wing of the Dc and the Social Democratic party, originally members of Cia but rejecting the merger with Cga (Romeo, 1979).

was more interested in building an independent collective bargaining area for the artisan sector (Lagala, 1992).

In contrast, the demands set before the government were very similar (Coppa, 1976; Pesole, 1997). In particular, from immediately after the War the two confederations lobbied the government for a policy in respect of artisan firms based on:

1. *Facilitations and exemptions:*

- concession of tax relief (on turnover tax and general income tax) and insurance contributions relief (for family allowances and apprentice artisans);
- creation of a welfare system for artisans in the form of a public system of compulsory insurance (for sickness, invalidity and old age) with a ratio between benefits and contributions that was to be higher than that offered by private insurance companies to industrial entrepreneurs;

2. *Substitutive factors:* distribution by specific government agencies of services and business promotion initiatives that, because of their small size, artisan firms were unable to perform or denied access to on the market at conditions that were comparable to those available to large companies, even though such services and activities were considered to be essential for the achievement of economic success:

- access to credit;
- commercial promotion;
- technical and artistic assistance;
- vocational training.

3. *Legal recognition of the category*, such as to define the pool of beneficiaries of the provisions outlined in the above two points.

4. *Artisan firms in the analyses of the Dc and the Pci*

Following the Italian Liberation a favourable view with regard to small companies was expressed by all the main political parties in the country, headed by the Dc and Pci.

The Dc had a social project that awarded positive value to the petite bourgeoisie, seeking to swell their ranks and thereby extend the ideals of economic independence – small firms, skilled craftsmen – throughout society.

In emphasising the role of small ownership, the Dc was heir to the very problem that had eventually urged Catholics into the political arena: the struggle to deflect the proletariat from the attractions of socialism. This ‘great labour question’, as Leo XIII defined it in the *Rerum Novarum*

of 1891, 'cannot be solved save by assuming as a principle that private ownership must be held sacred and inviolable. The law should therefore promote ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many people as possible to become owners' (cited in Camp, 1969: 84). In effect, the proletariat could be redeemed not as workers, but by conversion to something else, by restoring all those means of production that are indispensable for conducting one's own livelihood.

Thus, at the heart of the Dc's analysis, the solutions brought to bear on the labour problem centred on the diffusion of property. In the view of the Dc the small producer was the very symbol of integral society: he was both employer and labourer; he worked alongside his assistants and related to them in a highly personal way. Consequently, in the small firm, the organisation of work was 'more human', the worker's dignity 'better protected, the sense of responsibility and collaboration more keenly developed'. If large firms engendered class struggle, smaller units fostered solidarism, thus transcending the capital-labour divide (Dc, 1968: 246).

Moreover, the analysis of the Dc was influenced by the views of the Catholic economists of the early Twentieth century, who had stressed the economic rationality of small firms (Toniolo, 1951). The Dc never regarded technological progress as a prerogative of the large factory, but maintained that also small firms could exploit its benefit. Thus, small enterprise was considered not as an inferior proxy to large companies, but as an essential element for economic development that was to play a central role in the reconstruction of the country's economy (Weiss, 1988).

With regard to the Pci, the foundations of the party's small firm policy were set out by the reflections of its leader Palmiro Togliatti in the immediate post-war years and further developed by the 8th Congress of the party in 1956 (Togliatti, 1964; Pci, 1957). According to Togliatti, large enterprise is the most efficient way of organising production but in some circumstances, and the Italian case was one of them, it may lead to monopoly or oligopoly: he maintained that both of them tend to limit production in order to maximise profits. Small firms are not – contrary to the Dc's thinking – a 'type' of enterprise, by its very nature different from large concerns, and are not economically efficient. Small firms are instead the first stage in the life cycle of capitalist firms which must either grow or eventually fail. In either case, the presence of small firms opposes the tendency to economic stagnation deriving from the predominance of monopolies. Thus the growth of small firms must be encouraged because it facilitates an increase in production, employment and wages and therefore an improvement in the living standards of the working class (Brusco and Pezzini, 1990).

This reasoning was plaited with other considerations of a more immediately political nature regarding the need for the Pci to distract the middle classes from the influence of right-wing forces

to avoid a possible return to an authoritarian regime in the country. On this basis small entrepreneurs should become 'strategic allies' of the working class.

In the years of the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform – 1947-56) the Pci found it difficult to implement this strategic option – a situation that aided the organisational expansion of the rival association Cgia (Cgia, 1986). Despite this situation, through time the Dc and Pci reached an agreement on a policy to support artisan activities, the protection of which was enshrined in the new Italian constitution of 1948.

5. The first provisions supporting artisan enterprise

5.1. Tax relief and national insurance discounts

Immediately after the end of WW2 the Italian government decided on a series of tax relief measures for artisans. First of all the rate of turnover tax was reduced from 4% to 1%. With regard to general income tax, artisans were included among recipients of mixed income of capital and labour (class B); in 1946 the ministry of finance decided on the classification of artisan activities in the categories of income from independent professional work (class C-1), which was subject to lower tax rates, provided the following conditions were fulfilled within the firm (Lionetti, 1965):

1. that the income was obtained mainly from the work of the proprietor and his workforce and not from the capital employed;
2. that the use of capital was limited to the necessary transactions to purchase tools, machines, raw materials, goods or components needed for processing on behalf of customers and not for the production of products marketed in the name of the company;
3. the number of employees should be no greater than four, including family members, plus two apprentices.

Since 1948, artisan employers could also pay lower contributions for family allowances for their workers (13% as against 22.5% for industrial firms). For this purpose, a company was considered to be an artisan enterprise if it met the following requirements (Gualtierotti, 1977):

1. participation by the proprietor in the manual work performed within the company;
2. exercise of one of the activities shown in a specific list prepared by the ministry of labour;
3. number of employees unlimited, no more than five, or no more than three, depending the type of activity performed, excluding apprentices and cohabiting family members.

This definition of an artisan concern was confirmed also by a law of 1955, which exonerated artisan firms from the obligation of paying national insurance contributions for apprentices, which were instead provided by the state (Pesole, 1997).

5.2. The creation of Artigiancassa

The year 1947 saw the creation of the Credit fund for artisan firms (Artigiancassa), with an endowment fund of 500 million Lire, of which half was provided by the State and 50 million Lire each by five banks: Istituto di credito delle Casse di risparmio italiane, Istituto centrale delle Banche popolari, Monte dei Paschi di Siena, Banco di Napoli and Banco di Sicilia.

Artigiancassa was created in order to provide credit to artisan firms, either directly, or through the participating banks. State intervention was provided by means of two instruments: the endowment fund and an accessory guarantee on any ascertained losses, within the limit of 70% of any such losses up to a ceiling of two billion Lire (Baccini, 2002).

Artigiancassa started its activities in 1948, after having solved three key matters:

1. Identification of the pool of beneficiaries of loans. For this purpose, an artisan firm was defined as ‘a system of production based mainly on labour and oriented towards the production of goods’, the cost of which should be ‘composed in a significant percentage by the work employed to produce them’. This definition automatically excluded service activities and the repair of products;
2. The type of credit to be disbursed, which it was decided could be working capital (designed to assure the supply of raw materials and payment of processing costs), and capital equipment (aimed at improving, expanding and completing the production equipment of the company);
3. The collateral required for the granting of loans, which were divided into fiduciary loans for operations of working credit, and real loans for the purchase of capital equipment.

Table 3 shows that from 1948 to 1952 Artigiancassa performed a total of 6,705 loan transactions for a total of 4.7 billion Lire, 90% of which medium term. The loans were disbursed to just 1% of the approximately 650,000 artisan concerns recorded by the 1951 census. And some 46.8% of the transactions concerned companies based in the Lazio region, home to just 5.3% of the country's artisan firms. More generally, in this period Artigiancassa's penetration was restricted to the regions of central Italy and Basilicata, while it was almost entirely absent in Northern Italian

regions, where artisan firms were far more widespread: Lombardy, Piedmont, Veneto and Emilia-Romagna (Table 4).

The problems that emerged in the first five years of activity resulted in the need for reform of Artigiancassa in 1952. The reform ratified the abandonment of the concept of a specialised national institution for lending to artisan firms, prohibiting Artigiancassa from granting new loans. Artigiancassa was transformed into a rediscount and refinancing institute for the banks participating in the endowment fund and all the credit societies, savings banks, and rural and artisan banks, which were thenceforth authorised to grant medium-term capital equipment loans to artisan firms. In contrast, commercial loans were excluded from the facilitations. In application of the law, at this point artisan firms were considered to be those concerns that resulted as such in relation to the terms of the 1948 decree concerning family allowance.

Artigiancassa's endowment fund was increased to 5,500 million Lire by means of a government allocation of 5,000 million Lire. In addition, a fund of 1,500 million Lire was created at Artigiancassa – disbursed in the measure of 300 million Lire each year for five years, starting from the 1951-52 financial year – for state grants for interest relief on loans supporting artisan firms, disbursed by authorised banks.

The reform introduced four important changes with respect to the previous system (Parrillo, 1959):

1. a broader credit offering. The soft loans for artisan firms could now be distributed through a network of banks reaching all parts of Italy, which amounted to 5,201 branches in 1954, equivalent to 66.2% of all bank branches in the country;
2. direct responsibility of the banks involved, which assumed the legal title and risk of the loans subject to the facilitations managed by Artigiancassa;
3. entry of these banks, involved in the disbursement of short-term loans, into the circuit of medium-term credit. This was a first and important departure from the rule of separation between commercial credit and industrial credit, ratified by the 1936 banking law;
4. to reconcile the authorisation awarded to these banks to grant medium-term loans to artisan firms with their requirements for liquidity, Artigiancassa was utilised to release locked up assets through rediscounting and refinancing operations.

5.3. 'Substitutive factors': *Enapi, Artisan production market-exhibition, Ice, Iniasa*

Enapi, the national body for artisan firms and small businesses, had been operating since 1919 in the field of technical, commercial and artistic consultancy. Prior to the WW2 this organisation disposed of a good level of technical equipment and a nationwide network of branches, taking advantage of the space provided by the provincial headquarters of the national federation of artisans. Overall, during those years the work of the organisation was focused on supporting exhibition and training activities locally.

In 1950, to aid the recovery of the activities of Enapi, the state grant was increased from 2.4 million Lire to 60 million Lire (Camera dei Deputati, 1960), with these increased funds making it possible to create a dedicated pavilion for artisan activities in the main Italian trade fair (the Milan exhibition) right from the first editions in the post War years (Longoni, 1987).

In the area of commercial promotion, as from 1931 the international market-exhibition of artisan products was held in Florence; this event presented the best of artisan production in Italy, as selected by experts specifically designated by the national federation of artisans. Organisation of the market-exhibition improved through time, to the point at which the 1940 event hosted 60 thematic presentations plus numerous competitions, while the three days prior to official opening of the event were devoted to negotiations with traders. Already in the past a series of permanent showrooms had been created, designed to provide a connection between the annual events. After a suspension lasting six years because of the war, the Exhibition was reopened in 1947. In 1950 the management organisation was awarded an annual government grant of 15 million Lire (Zamagni, 1979).

In the field of assistance with exports, in 1949 Ice (the institute for foreign trade), created a commission to investigate matters connected with the export of the products of artisan companies and small industrial concerns. The commission conducted a complex series of activities including exhibitions, advertising campaigns, market surveys, business information assistance actions, and interventions to solve commercial disputes (Lionetti, 1965).

In the vocational training sector, Iniasa (the national institution for vocational training in the artisan sector) was set up in 1952. By the mid 1960s this organisation had opened some 124 vocational training centres. The courses offered by the centres for technical draftsmen, fitters-assemblers, lathe operators, maintenance fitters, hydraulic and heating system engineers, radio repair technicians, television repair technicians and electricians were particularly numerous (Zamagni, 1979).

6. The 1956 Artisan Act

We have discussed the manner in which the Fascist regime classified artisans in 1926 in 42 communities of artistic trades and 26 communities of usual trades. This provision was repealed with the downfall of the Fascist regime with the result that Italy was without any form of legal code governing artisan activities immediately following WWII.

This legislative vacuum was only partially filled by the provisions concerning general income tax in 1946 and concerning family allowances in 1948.

A comprehensive law on the judicial status of artisan firms was approved only in 1956, voted in by all parties, although only after overcoming the resistance of MPs linked to Confindustria. The Artisan Act established an extension of the legal definition of an artisan firm that was unequalled in Europe. Specifically, an artisan firm:

1. Had to be organised and function with the professional work, including manual labour, of the proprietor or his family members;
2. Could have employees:
 - if no series work was undertaken: up to 10 employees (including family members) plus 10 apprentices;
 - if series production work was undertaken or the company provided transport services: up to 5 employees (including family members) plus 5 apprentices;
 - if the company operated in the sector of artistic work, traditional work, or tailored clothing: no limit on the number of employees, but a maximum of 20 apprentices.

Thus, the 1956 Act defined artisanship not as a professional category, but as a legal regime, membership of which entitled the proprietor to a wide variety of benefits. Unlike the German and French legislation, in which the artisan qualification was defined on the basis of lists of trade activities, the 1956 Italian law defined artisan enterprise on the basis of a maximum number of persons employed⁴. Furthermore, alone in Europe, the Italian system did not rely on credentialism: the prospecting Italian artisan required no certification of expertise, thus ensuring ease of entry to the sector. An approach based on the delimitation of the size of artisan firms was preferred because it would facilitate the multiplication of small firms rather than their growth in size and concentration⁵.

⁴ Without prejudice to the specified dimensional requirements, the term artisan could also be applied to one-man businesses, general partnerships in limited responsibility or cooperative form, provided the majority of partners were artisans. This system differed markedly from that adopted in West Germany, where the size of the enterprise was at the discretion of its promoter and an artisan firm could even be a joint-stock company. In fact artisanship became so broad-based in West Germany that in the 1970s artisan firms had an average of 141 employees per establishment (Barberis, 1980).

⁵ In contrast, the 1953 German Artisan Act imposed no size limitation but specified obligatory training and qualifications for those desiring to be registered as artisans. Such measures were clearly aimed at limiting newcomers to the area of artisanship (Weiss, 1988).

Notwithstanding this, the law retained the proviso that the criteria it established for the definition of an artisan company could not be applied for the purposes of tax regulations and with reference to family allowance, which would continue to be governed by the original legislation.

The reason it took eleven years from the end of WW2 to arrive at approval of the Artisan Act is to be sought in the fact that it was a consequence of a turning point in the policy of the Dc further to the poor results achieved by the party at the 1953 general election. According to the new leadership, headed by Amintore Fanfani, the lacklustre election result was mainly due to the organisational weakness of the party and the fact that it was poorly rooted in Italian society. In order to muster its forces, it was considered that the party would have to maximise its penetration in civil society, breaking away from the interests and dependence on its traditional backers. Specifically, the Dc appeared to be excessively dependent on the Church and Catholic organisations, on traditional southern Italian clientele, on Confindustria and on big private corporations. It was considered that this situation restricted the level of support available from other social strata. Therefore, the Dc had to find the ability to stand on its own feet from an organisational standpoint, seeking sources of finance that were less binding and reducing the level of conditioning of its strategies by traditional power structures (Mattina, 1991).

In this scenario, the party became more willing to accept the demands of artisan associations and to find ways of strengthening their organisational structure. Indeed, the adoption of particularly generous criteria for recognition of the status of artisan firm was a measure that would serve also to aid the strengthening of independent artisan associations, by extending their potential membership. In effect, in the presence of associations specialised in representing the interests of artisans, extensively located throughout the whole of Italy and securely linked with the political parties supporting the new facilitated regime for artisan enterprise, membership of Confindustria became far less attractive for micro businesses (Maraffi, 1994).

7. The waiving of reservations of the Artisan Act in relation to tax and social security issues

Approval of the Artisan Act was welcomed by artisan associations (Pesole, 1997). However, they went on to lobby lawmakers to waive reservations concerning tax and social security regulations in such a way that the definition of artisan firm could be applied across the board to all effects and purposes.

Acceptance of this demand was slow in coming, because wariness in granting excessive facilitations to industrial and commercial companies that could be included in the ranks of entities

benefiting from legislation for artisan firms was diffused among parliamentary groups. That's why the reservation concerning family allowances was waived only in 1965, while in respect of general income tax the reservation was waived only partially and not until 1968 with the creation for that purpose of a new definition of an artisan firm, broader than that of the 1946 decree although more restrictive than that of the 1956 Artisan Act. The 1968 law established that general income tax class C-1 would be applicable to artisan firms that, primarily organised with the labour of the taxpayer and his family members, employed, in addition to the proprietor:

1. if they were not engaged in series production and if they conducted their business in the artistic, traditional, and tailored clothing sectors: no more than 10 employees (including family members), of which no more than 6 blue collar workers;
2. if series production work was undertaken or the company provided transport services: no more than 6 employees (including family members), of which no more than 4 blue-collar workers.

This law was abrogated by the tax reform of 1974, which removed all differences between artisan entrepreneurs and other businessmen (Gualtierotti, 1977).

8. Obligatory health insurance

In 1956 a few months after enactment of the Artisan Act, the legislator agreed to another of the principles for which artisan associations were lobbying: obligatory health insurance⁶. This provision ratified the creation, in all Italian provinces, of a mutual sickness fund for the proprietors of artisan firms, as defined by the Artisan Act, and their family members. In addition, a national federation of Mutual funds for artisans was set up (Federmutue), with the attribution of regulatory and coordinative functions in respect of the activities of the provincial mutual funds. Artisans were granted hospital, specialist (diagnostic and treatment) and obstetric assistance, although generic and pharmaceutical assistance were excluded. The following provisions were then passed in order to meet the costs deriving from application of the law:

1. an annual government contribution of L. 1,500 for each person covered by the fund;
2. an annual contribution of L. 1,000 to be paid by each assisted person, of which L. 700 for the provincial mutual fund and L. 300 to be paid to Federmutue for the creation of a national solidarity fund to be divided among the individual provinces;

⁶ Up to that time there existed only voluntary forms of insurance operating in accordance with the model of mutual benefit associations (Pesole, 1997).

3. a possible supplementary amount for each artisan, to be decided by the provincial mutual fund, taking account of the economic capacity of individual artisan firms, to cover any higher costs of the health assistance offered.

In the following years the state contribution was gradually increased. At the end of the 1960s the amount had risen to L. 3,000 per assisted person, plus the L. 1,675 million paid directly to the national solidarity fund managed by Federmutue (Gualtierotti, 1977).

Starting from 1964, the entitlement to health assistance was extended to cover also retired artisan firm proprietors.

As can be seen in Table 5, the number of assisted persons increased steadily: from 1,461,000 in 1957 to 3,616,000 in 1971.

9. Obligatory insurance for invalidity, old age, and surviving dependents

In 1959 artisans and their family members were also granted obligatory insurance for invalidity, old age, and surviving dependents. The minimum monthly pension was set at L. 5,000, an amount that was lower than that of blue-collar workers. The minimum pension age was set at 65 for men and 60 for women, compared to the 60 years of age for other categories. The management costs were to be met by the contributions of the insured parties (L. 600 per month) plus the aid of the state, in the amount of 2.5 billion Lire.

In the 1960s, in response to pressure exerted by artisan associations, minimum pension amounts were gradually increased, reaching L. 13,200 per month in 1968, while the state contribution was increased to L. 4 billion annually. Also the contributions of insured parties increased, reaching L. 1,200 per month in 1965 (Gualtierotti, 1977).

As shown in Table 6, the number of pensions paid out increased year on year. Although initially the payments made were almost exclusively relative to old age pensions, through the years these were gradually overtaken by invalidity benefits. In 1971, out of 307,475 benefits paid, 149,682 were for invalidity, 109,303 for old age, and 10,166 for surviving dependents.

10. Artigiancassa from 1953 to 1971

Enactment of the 1956 Artisan Act was followed by a series of provisions that extended the operative assignments of Artigiancassa. A law passed in the same year provided for:

1. An extension of the credit facilitations for the formation of stocks of raw materials and products required for the firm's production cycle. The credit for said stock could not exceed 20% of the loan agreed for capital equipment, or the value of plant⁷;
2. Authorisation awarded also to private banks to work with Artigiancassa. With this measure the entire Italian banking industry was now authorised to grant soft loans to artisan firms;
3. The extension of the maximum duration of the rediscount applied by Artigiancassa from two to five years, freeing banks still further from the risks associated with locked up assets.

A subsequent law of 1958 increased the endowment fund of Artigiancassa from 5,500 to 10,500 million Lire. Moreover, this law established that the net profits resulting from the financial statements of Artigiancassa, after deducting a rate of 20% to be allocated to the reserve fund, should be disbursed to the banks participating in the endowment fund, up to an amount equivalent to 4% of the stake held by each of them. In this manner, from 1958 onward the state was awarded a dividend on its stake in the endowment fund, which was destined to integrate the interest relief grant fund.

This measure was extremely important because it established the interest relief grant fund on a permanent basis, while the 1952 law had financed it for only five years: a connection was created between the endowment fund and the interest relief fund, with the latter fund fed by interest earned on the former (Parrillo, 1959).

Over the following twelve years there were a further five state allocations into the endowment fund, which stood at 103.5 billion Lire in 1971. These were integrated by twelve allocations to the interest relief fund, for a total of 200 billion lire.

These provisions were integrated, in 1964, by the creation at Artigiancassa of a central guarantee fund – fed by a state allocation of 1.4 billion Lire – which facilitates loans in the absence of sufficient securities covering up to 70% of individual bank loans. There were a further three allocations between 1966 and 1969, bringing the fund up to 7.65 billion Lire (Baccini, 2002).

Table 7 shows how, after the 1952 reform, the number and amount of credit transactions managed by Artigiancassa increased rapidly to a peak in 1962. There was a reduction over the following four years due to the monetary stringency policy adopted by Banca d'Italia in 1963 and the exhaustion, in 1966, of the state interest relief fund (Camera dei Deputati, 1966). Once the fund had been replenished, 1967 saw a significant recovery of the activity of Artigiancassa, which peaked at 24,263 transactions in 1968 for a total of more than 120 billion Lire, remaining at significant levels also over the next three years.

Overall, from 1953 to 1971 Artigiancassa assisted 207,777 artisans with subsidised credit worth 786 billion lire. The proportion of artisans benefiting from soft loans over the period was just

⁷ This figure was increased to 30% in 1964.

above 14% of the artisans registered with the provincial Chambers of Commerce (Table 8). Both in absolute terms and in relation to the size of its artisan sector, the NECRs benefited most from state support: by 1971 this area accounted for 41% of all concerns and almost 60% of beneficiaries. Firms located in the Northwest were also favoured in loan distribution (27% of concerns and 32% of beneficiaries) whilst the backward South was clearly penalised (32% of concerns and only 9% of beneficiaries).

Thus, there is a clear correlation between the areas receiving the largest proportion of loans and the regions in which small firms flourished and multiplied. If the data are disaggregated still to consider the proportion of firms financed within each region, the concentration of resources in the NECRs is astonishing. The Marches region fared best with 35.4% of its firms obtaining at least one loan. Emilia-Romagna ranked second with 26.7%, followed by Umbria and Veneto, with 23.3% and 22.1% respectively. Lombardy led the Northwest group with 20.5%. By contrast, the best performing region in the South was the Abruzzi with 9%, followed by Molise with 7.8% and Calabria with 6.1%.

11. 'Substitutive factors': Enapi and the Artisan production market-exhibition from 1950 to 1971.

The 60 million yearly state grant decided in 1950 was soon found to be insufficient to relaunch Enapi. At the end of the 1950s the organisation had an office in just 14 provinces out of 92; in 6 provinces Enapi merely had an agency with token remuneration of L. 25,000 per month, in 15 provinces it had offices with no form of remuneration, while it had no offices at all in the remaining 57 provinces (Camera dei Deputati, 1960).

In relation to this situation, in 1960 Parliament voted to increase the annual state grant from 60 to 300 million Lire. The new resources were mainly employed to strengthen the institution's peripheral organisation by creating regional centres and a mobile training centre which would be used to deliver assistance to artisans nationwide by means of direct visits to their workshops, with the aim of disseminating knowledge and the potential uses of new products and new production equipment.

The result was a significant increase in the development of the institution in the mid 1960s (Senato della Repubblica, s.d.; Lionetti, 1965).

Beneficiary firms of the technical assistance service increased from 10,860 in 1962 to 17,992 in 1964, of which 586 for production organisation, 1,161 for vocational updating and mobile assistance, 16,118 for technical testing of machinery and building works (tests for eligibility to

grants available from the development fund for southern Italy) and 127 for projects, patents and miscellaneous studies.

In contrast, commercial assistance involved 1,950 firms in 1962 and 8,867 in 1964. In that year the service was offered to 1,247 exhibitors at international trade fairs and exhibitions and 2,403 exhibitors at Italian trade fairs and exhibitions, while a further 4,438 companies were placed in contact with foreign businesses. In addition, collection centres were set up for artisan company products in Modena and Cosenza and showrooms in Munich, Paris, Montreal and Zurich, with the responsibility of selecting the products that provided the best fit with the respective markets.

Artistic assistance was provided for 2,100 companies in 1962 and 4,864 in 1964: 1,064 for an artistic review, 3,650 for selection of products to be offered on the market, and 150 for the assignment of models for renewal of the product range.

Enapi also launched a programme of collaboration with Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (the national research council), which, in 1967, had resulted in the opening of a research centre for the ceramics sector in Faenza, while similar initiatives were being developed for the textiles, wood, metals and marble sectors.

In 1967 the annual state grant to Enapi was increased to 600 million Lire. This extra funding enabled the institution to speed up its intervention programmes, which concerned applied research, the design of shared services for groups of companies, the development of the most suitable urban planning solutions for artisan industrial districts, and incentives for the creation of models and prototypes by artisan companies (Camera dei Deputati, 1967).

On another tack, the Artisan production market-exhibition had reopened in Florence in 1947, drawing some 600 exhibitors that year. In the following years the event evolved significantly and it opened its doors to international markets as from 1952. The pavilions were extended and renovated, with the result that in 1958 the number of exhibitors was up to 2,230, including many foreign companies, while the level of turnover had risen from the initial 150 million to 3 billion Lire. The annual state allocation of 15 million Lire was soon found to be insufficient and the event management recorded a series of deficits, which were made good by the state in 1958 with a one-off contribution of 70 million Lire (Camera dei Deputati, 1958).

As from 1966, also the national furniture exhibition and the leather and footwear trade fair were held in the premises of the market-exhibition (Camera dei Deputati, 1973).

In 1967 the market-exhibition drew 3,400 exhibitors from 37 countries, while many more applications were rejected due to space shortages. To allow further development of the event it was decided to transfer it to a new larger site on the outskirts of the city in 1963. Construction of the new pavilions and the annexed service facilities took many years and was completed only at the end

of the 1970s (Camera dei Deputati, 1977). However, in order to allow the project to be undertaken (the required investment totalled 5 billion Lire), in 1967 the exhibition management organisation took out a twenty-five year loan (Chamber of Deputies, 1971) which was repaid also thanks to an increase of the annual state grant to 150 million Lire (Camera dei Deputati, 1967).

12. Conclusions

This paper has shown – in opposition to the views of Becattini (1998) and in agreement with Weiss (1988) – that the Italian state carried out an artisanship policy of an extent that was unparalleled in Europe. This policy was based on the provision, on the one hand, of lower tax and employers' contributions and welfare benefits at reduced premiums and, on the other hand, of 'substitutive factors': soft loans, services and promotional initiatives by state agencies.

However, we diverge from Weiss's view that government action on behalf of artisans was not in response to the demands of pressure groups but was independently conceived and conducted by the biggest governing party – the Dc – as a coherent implementation of its ideologically based social project aimed at extending small ownership in the country. On the contrary, we argue – in accordance with Arrighetti and Seravalli (1997) – that the action of artisan associations played an important role in shaping the actual scope of artisan policy.

In fact, it took some eleven years from the end of WWII for the Artisan Act to be approved, and even afterwards the effective extent of the facilitations to be granted to the artisan sector was still the subject of discussion. It follows that rather than a preordained policy of the Dc, the chain of events involved a gradual extension of regulations assisting the sector in response to insistent demands from artisan associations, with the government always taking care to enlist the parliamentary support of the main opposition party.

Some scholars (e.g. Baccini, 2002) observed that, contrary to other European countries, Italian artisanship policy did not foster the growth in the size of firms but rather provided incentives to remain small, since it was a condition in order to qualify for state benefits not to exceed the size limits established by the Artisan Act, and they have suggested the presence of a relationship between the prevalence of SMEs in the Italian economy and the presence of an articulated system of state facilitations for small companies, constituting an emblematic case of what Sabel and Zeitlin (1997: 20) referred to as 'the reciprocal relation between the constitution of actors and the formation of the context in which they make their choices'.

In this respect, we hold that artisan policy played a twofold role: partly 'defensive', protecting a segment of artisan firms, and partly 'proactive' serving as a stimulus for the modernisation and strengthening of smaller production units.

Therefore, several facilitations – such as state participation in national insurance contributions on the hiring of apprentices and obligatory insurance against sickness and invalidity, old age and surviving dependents – were made available to all artisans without distinction, while others – those concerning general income tax and family allowances – were explicitly reserved for smaller and presumably more disadvantaged businesses. These can therefore be rightly considered as measures aimed principally at defending a stratum of small firms.

On the other hand, various other interventions were selective and served to stimulate innovation. These include the soft loans of Artigiancassa, which were awarded to just 14% of artisans. The majority of these loans were disbursed in the more developed areas of the country, specifically the NECRs, where small businesses were particularly dynamic, while only a minimum proportion were allocated to the backward South, which had a significant concentration of small marginal concerns.

Likewise, no more than 5% of artisan firms operating in the country, selected from among those presenting the best possibilities for development, benefited from the promotion services provided by Enapi and the Florence market-exhibition.

TABLES

Table 1 – Artisan firms and employees (1937-1971)

Industry	1937-39			1951			1961			1971		
	Firms	Employees	(a)	Firms	Employees	(a)	Firms	Employees	(a)	Firms	Employees	(a)
Food	59,135	120,761	21.0	40,650	80,367	19.7	39,348	103,554	25.6	34,362	96,094	25.3
Metallurgy	...	...	...	198	538	0.4	500	2,967	1.6	1,513	6,457	2.6
Mechanics	95,493	171,676	20.3	107,942	177,740	19.3	134,901	357,762	25.6	183,037	480,042	25.2
Non-metal minerals	13,325	29,319	14.2	10,239	22,117	11.0	12,279	45,257	14.2	15,258	57,285	17.3
Paper and printing	...	...	...	4,614	11,417	8.4	7,518	30,594	19.1	11,050	41,608	17.8
Tanning, leather and footwear	121,058	146,305	67.9	93,492	121,998	61.0	63,828	103,445	46.1	38,733	83,870	36.6
Wood and furniture	115,504	180,104	63.5	101,121	164,614	56.3	96,968	222,654	58.7	90,882	206,713	52.1
Textiles	27,627	36,498	5.8	29,869	41,917	6.5	36,070	76,832	13.0	40,640	97,462	18.0
Apparel and fashion wear	165,881	246,202	79.7	123,833	191,261	76.6	113,376	211,203	62.3	91,205	164,455	39.5
Chemicals and rubber	...	...	...	3,892	7,890	3.5	6,668	21,494	6.7	6,947	17,390	4.3
Other manuf.	...	...	...	7,010	12,608	23.8	9,280	20,493	16.8	20,126	64,228	32.1
<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>597,723</i>	<i>930,865</i>	<i>26.7</i>	<i>523,060</i>	<i>832,467</i>	<i>23.9</i>	<i>520,736</i>	<i>1,176,246</i>	<i>26.4</i>	<i>533,763</i>	<i>1,318,044</i>	<i>24.9</i>
<i>Agriculture, forestry, and fishing</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>16,827</i>	<i>37,097</i>	<i>33.1</i>
<i>Mining and quarrying</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>3,117</i>	<i>11,837</i>	<i>13.5</i>	<i>2,333</i>	<i>8,854</i>	<i>12.4</i>
<i>Construction</i>	<i>49,253</i>	<i>78,615</i>	<i>14.1</i>	<i>14,850</i>	<i>31,075</i>	<i>5.9</i>	<i>31,195</i>	<i>127,513</i>	<i>13.9</i>	<i>105,883</i>	<i>304,225</i>	<i>30.5</i>
<i>Transport</i>	<i>106,725</i>	<i>136,011</i>	<i>24.7</i>	<i>47,759</i>	<i>62,570</i>	<i>12.0</i>	<i>66,891</i>	<i>113,540</i>	<i>15.3</i>	<i>79,240</i>	<i>119,027</i>	<i>13.3</i>
<i>Health</i>	<i>61,737</i>	<i>97,916</i>	<i>84.1</i>	<i>65,038</i>	<i>99,913</i>	<i>71.1</i>	<i>98,690</i>	<i>176,233</i>	<i>73.8</i>	<i>139,377</i>	<i>229,496</i>	<i>50.5</i>
TOTAL	815,438	1,243,407	25.6	650,707	1,026,025	21.9	746,246	1,686,905	26.2	877,422	2,016,743	25.7

Source: Istat, *Industrial censuses*, 1937-39, 1951, 1961, 1971.

(a) Percentage of artisan firms on total employment of the sector.

Table 2 – Artisan firms registered with provincial Chambers of Commerce

Year	Firms
1958	664,073
1959	797,970
1960	854,376
1961	916,912
1962	959,631
1963	1,024,694
1964	1,073,954
1965	1,082,401
1966	1,115,297
1967	1,139,017
1968	1,165,802
1969	1,187,922
1970	1,205,481
1971	1,231,525

Source: Baccini (2002, Table 4).

Table 3 – Loans granted by Artigiancassa, 1948-1952 (thousands of lire)

	No.	Amount
1948	347	190,795
1949	1,402	975,692
1950	1,592	1,056,660
1951	1,784	1,069,601
1952	1,580	1,404,074

Source: Baccini (2002, Table 1).

Table 4 – Regional distribution of artisan proprietors and firms financed by Artigiancassa, 1948-1952.

Region	Firms financed (1948-1952)	Artisan proprietors (1951 census)	% of regional firms financed
Piedmont	0.3	9.4	0.03
Lombardy	6.9	15.6	0.45
Liguria	0.2	3.0	0.07
<i>Total Northwest</i>	<i>7.4</i>	<i>28.0</i>	<i>0.27</i>
Venezie	1.2	11.5	0.11
Emilia-Romagna	1.9	9.3	0.21
<i>Total Northeast</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>20.8</i>	<i>0.15</i>
Tuscany	5.8	7.0	0.86
Marches	6.9	3.3	2.15
Umbria	6.0	1.6	3.84
Lazio	46.8	5.3	9.12
<i>Total Centre</i>	<i>65.5</i>	<i>17.2</i>	<i>3.93</i>
Abruzzi-Molise	1.1	3.7	0.30
Campania	7.8	7.7	1.04
Apulia	2.3	5.8	0.42
Basilicata	2.8	1.5	1.90
Calabria	3.2	4.0	0.83
Sicily	4.3	9.1	0.49
Sardinia	2.5	2.2	1.16
<i>Total South</i>	<i>24.0</i>	<i>34.0</i>	<i>0.73</i>
<i>Total Italy</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>1.03</i>

Source: Baccini (2002, Table 3).

Table 5 – Artisans registered with the Casse Mutue (thousands of people)

	Owners	Relatives	Pensioners	Relatives	Total
1957	559	897			1,461
1958	640	1,020			1,660
1959	779	1,178			1,957
1960	873	1,294			2,167
1961	926	1,367			2,293
1962	994	1,449			2,443
1963	1,078	1,535			2,613
1964	1,132	1,646	27	10	2,815
1965	1,154	1,692	37	13	2,896
1966	1,188	1,756	62	24	3,030
1967	1,217	1,805	79	31	3,132
1968	1,239	1,868	100	39	3,246
1969	1,281	1,889	121	47	3,338
1970	1,298	1,970	140	55	3,463
1971	1,296	2,095	161	64	3,616

Source: Istat, *Italian statistical register*, 1957-1971.

Table 6 – Disability, old age and survivorship pensions to artisans

	Disability	Old age	Survivorship	Total
1960	561	31,617	339	32,517
1961	3,060	47,807	1,791	52,658
1962	5,533	62,673	3,506	71,712
1963	9,494	82,647	6,675	98,776
1964	22,899	92,544	10,341	125,784
1965	39,305	102,180	14,443	155,928
1966	56,270	107,495	19,587	183,352
1967	73,814	109,789	25,420	209,023
1968	90,034	110,394	29,866	230,294
1969	106,375	108,797	34,186	249,358
1970	128,238	111,722	42,264	282,224
1971	149,682	109,303	48,490	307,475

Source: Istat, *Statistical register of assistance and social security*, 1960-1971.

Tab. 7. Loans receiving interest subsidy, discount and state guarantee by Artigiancassa, 1953-1971 (thousands of lire)

	Subsidised loans		Discounted loans		State guaranteed loans	
	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount
1953	270	415,768	172	257,122		
1954	1,836	2,803,996	822	1,274,074		
1955	2,658	4,288,273	1,870	2,960,607		
1956	2,966	4,763,141	1,751	2,824,789		
1957	4,393	7,330,417	3,294	5,413,834		
1958	6,483	12,035,772	4,023	7,284,205		
1959	7,900	16,450,716	3,696	7,423,805		
1960	10,532	25,188,831	5,048	12,099,378		
1961	15,069	38,994,292	2,458	5,671,487		
1962	15,396	42,155,969	3,592	8,887,850		
1963	14,682	45,137,308	4,454	12,628,537		
1964	12,398	38,786,747	3,368	9,862,290		
1965	8,699	27,072,729	5,413	16,355,987		
1966	5,572	17,904,675	2,315	7,169,449	55	143,552
1967	18,494	70,652,341	5,373	20,991,543	665	2,755,883
1968	24,263	120,008,606	5,039	24,198,335	1,634	8,647,847
1969	19,625	104,330,238	3,298	17,095,324	1,944	11,214,882
1970	16,525	92,630,640	2,837	16,068,656	1,387	8,732,045
1971	20,016	114,591,359	4,668	26,416,296	1,944	11,031,240

Source: Baccini (2002, Table A.7).

Table 8 – Regional distribution of artisan proprietors and firms financed by Artigiancassa, 1953-1971.

Region	Firms financed (1953-1971)	Artisan proprietors*	% of regional firms financed
Piedmont	7.8	8.6	12.9
Valle d'Aosta	0.1	0.2	3.2
Lombardy	22.2	15.3	20.5
Liguria	2.0	3.2	8.7
<i>Total Northwest</i>	<i>32.1</i>	<i>27.3</i>	<i>16.6</i>
Trentino-Alto Adige	0.6	1.5	5.9
Veneto	11.9	7.7	22.1
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	1.7	2.2	10.8
Emilia-Romagna	19.0	10.1	26.7
<i>Total Northeast</i>	<i>33.2</i>	<i>21.5</i>	<i>21.9</i>
Tuscany	8.9	8.0	15.8
Marches	8.5	3.4	35.4
Umbria	2.5	1.6	23.3
Lazio	5.6	6.2	12.9
<i>Total Centre</i>	<i>25.5</i>	<i>19.2</i>	<i>19.0</i>
Abruzzi	1.4	2.3	9.0
Molise	0.4	0.7	7.8
Campania	1.8	6.0	4.2
Apulia	1.7	5.6	4.2
Basilicata	0.2	1.0	3.1
Calabria	1.2	2.8	6.1
Sicily	2.3	10.9	3.0
Sardinia	0.2	2.6	0.9
<i>Total South</i>	<i>9.2</i>	<i>32.0</i>	<i>4.1</i>
<i>Total Italy</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>14.2</i>

Source: Weiss (1988, Tables F-G)

* Artisan concerns registered with provincial Chambers of Commerce on 31 Dec. 1970.

REFERENCES

- Arrighetti, A. and G. Seravalli (1997), 'Istituzioni e dualismo dimensionale dell'industria italiana', in F. Barca (ed.), *Storia del capitalismo italiano dal dopoguerra a oggi*, Roma: Donzelli, pp. 335-388.
- Baccini, A. (2002), *Artigiancassa: da Istituto di credito speciale a Banca per le imprese artigiane. 1953-2001*, Firenze: Giunti.
- Barberis, C. (1980), 'L'artigianato in Italia', in C. Barberis, G. Harvey and O. Tavone, *L'artigianato in Italia e nella Comunità Economica Europea*, Milano: Franco Angeli, pp. 7-82.
- Becattini G. (1998), *Distretti industriali e made in Italy. Le basi socioculturali del nostro sviluppo economico*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri.
- Bellandi, M. (1999), '«Terza Italia» e «distretti industriali» dopo la Seconda Guerra mondiale', in F. Amatori, D. Bigazzi, R. Giannetti and L. Segreto (eds), *Storia d'Italia. Annali 15, L'industria*, Torino: Einaudi, pp. 841-891.
- Bianco, M. (2003), *L'industria italiana. Numeri, peculiarità, politiche della nostra economia industriale*, Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Bolchini P. (2003), 'Piccole e medie industrie, liberismo e protezionismo', in P. Ciocca and G. Toniolo (eds), *Storia economica d'Italia*, vol. 3: *Industrie, mercati, istituzioni*, t. 1: *Le strutture dell'economia*, Roma-Bari: Laterza, pp. 347-426.
- Brusco, S. and M. Pezzini (1990), 'Small-Scale Enterprise in the Ideology of the Italian Left', in F. Pyke, G. Becattini and W. Sengenberger (eds), *Industrial Districts and Inter-Firm Cooperation in Italy*. Geneva: Ilo, pp. 142-159.
- Brusco, S. and S. Paba (1997), 'Per una storia dei distretti industriali dal secondo dopoguerra agli anni Novanta', in F. Barca (ed.), *Storia del capitalismo italiano dal dopoguerra a oggi*, Roma: Donzelli, pp. 265-333.
- Cafagna, L. (1989), *Dualismo e sviluppo nella storia d'Italia*, Venezia: Marsilio.
- Camera dei Deputati (1958), 'Erogazione di contributi alla Mostra-mercato dell'artigianato in Firenze ed all'Istituto veneto per il lavoro in Venezia', in *Discussioni della XII Commissione (Industria) in sede legislativa. 1958-1963*, DDL no. 362, 19 November, Roma: Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati.
- Camera dei Deputati (1960), 'Aumento del contributo statale all'Ente nazionale per l'artigianato e le piccole industrie (Enapi)', in *Discussioni della XII Commissione (Industria) in sede legislativa. 1958-1963*, DDL no. 2524, 30 November, Roma: Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati.
- Camera dei Deputati (1966), 'Aumento del fondo per il concorso statale nel pagamento degli interessi sulle operazioni di credito a favore delle imprese artigiane', in *Discussioni della VI Commissione (Finanze e Tesoro) in sede legislativa. 1963-1968*, Parte II, DDL no. 3311, 29 September, Roma: Stabilimenti Tipografici Carlo Colombo.
- Camera dei Deputati (1967), 'Aumento del contributo statale all'Ente nazionale per l'artigianato e le piccole industrie (Enapi) e alla Mostra-mercato dell'artigianato in Firenze', in *Discussioni della XII Commissione (Industria) in sede legislativa. 1963-1968*, DDL no. 3955, 28 June, Roma: Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati.
- Camera dei Deputati (1971), 'Aumento del contributo statale all'Ente nazionale per l'artigianato e le piccole industrie (ENAPI) e alla Mostra-mercato nazionale dell'artigianato in Firenze', in *Discussioni della XII Commissione (Industria e Commercio – Artigianato – Commercio con l'Estero) in sede legislativa. 1968-1972*, DDL no. 3317, 24 June, Roma: Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati.
- Camera dei Deputati (1973), 'Aumento del contributo statale all'Ente Autonomo «Mostra-mercato nazionale dell'artigianato» in Firenze', in *Documenti – Disegni di legge e relazioni*, DDL no. 760-A, 3 April, Roma: Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati.
- Camera dei Deputati (1977), 'Contributo straordinario all'Ente autonomo «Mostra mercato nazionale dell'artigianato» di Firenze per il completamento della nuova sede (*Approvato dalla X Commissione permanente del Senato*)' in

Discussioni della XII Commissione (Industria e Commercio – Artigianato – Commercio con l'Estero) in sede legislativa. 1976-1979, DDL no. 1572, 21 July, Roma: Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati.

Camp, R.L. (1969), *The Papal Ideology of Social Reform*, Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Cgia (Confederazione generale italiana dell'artigianato) (1986), *40 anni di storia 1946-1986*, s.l.: s.e.

Colli, A. (2002), *I volti di Proteo: storia della piccola impresa in Italia nel Novecento*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri.

Coppa, G. (1976), *Trent'anni di sindacalismo artigiano nella storia della Confederazione Nazionale dell'Artigianato*, Parte I: *Le origini. 1944-1953*, Roma: Elengraf.

Dc (Democrazia Cristiana) (1968), *Atti e documenti (1943-67)*, 2 vols, Roma: Cinque Lune.

De Cecco, M. (2001), 'L'economia italiana negli ultimi trent'anni', in S. Cassese (ed.), *Ritratto dell'Italia*, Roma-Bari: Laterza, pp. 59-94.

Federico, G. (ed.) (1994), *The Economic Development of Italy Since 1870*, Aldershot: Elgar.

Giannetti, R. and M. Vasta (2005), *Storia dell'impresa industriale italiana*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

Gualtierotti, P. (1977), *L'impresa artigiana*, Milano: Giuffrè.

Lagala, C. (1992), 'L'artigianato', in L. Bellardi (ed.), *Relazioni industriali e contrattuali e contrattazione collettiva in Italia (1945-1992)*, vol. 2, Bari: Cacucci.

Lionetti, S. (1965), *Artigianato. Gestione – Esportazione*, Roma: Irmarm.

Longoni, G.M. (1987), *La Fiera nella storia di Milano*, Milano: Motta.

Maraffi, M. (1994), 'L'organizzazione degli interessi in Italia. 1870-1980', in A. Martinelli (ed.), *L'azione collettiva degli imprenditori italiani. Le organizzazioni di rappresentanza degli interessi industriali in prospettiva comparata*, Milano: Edizioni di Comunità, pp. 137-196.

Mattina, L. (1991), *Gli industriali e la democrazia. La Confindustria nella formazione dell'Italia repubblicana*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

Parrillo, F. (1959), 'Politica e sviluppo del credito all'artigianato' *Rivista di politica economica*, 49 (7), 1185-1248.

Pci (Partito Comunista Italiano) (1957), *La dichiarazione programmatica e le tesi dell'VIII Congresso del PCI*, Roma: Editori Riuniti.

Pescosolido, G. (1982), 'Industria e artigianato', *Annali dell'economia italiana*, XI (1953-1958), t. 2, Milano: Ipsoa, pp. 112-113.

Pesole, D. (1997), *L'artigianato nell'economia italiana. Dal dopoguerra a oggi*, Milano: Il Sole 24 Ore Libri.

Piore, M.J. and C.F. Sabel (1984), *The Second Industrial Divide: Possibilities for prosperità*, New York, NY: Basic Books.

Romeo, D. (1979), 'L'artigianato italiano: struttura e relazioni esterne', in Aa.Vv., *Storia dell'artigianato italiano*, Milano: Etas Libri, pp. 308-333.

Sabel, C.F. and J. Zeitlin (1997), 'Stories, strategies, structures: rethinking historical alternatives to mass production', in C.F. Sabel and J. Zeitlin (eds), *World of Possibilities. Flexibility and Mass Production in Western Industrialization*, Cambridge, UK-New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-33.

Senato della Repubblica (s.d.), *IV Legislatura, Relazione della Corte dei Conti al Parlamento sulla gestione finanziaria degli Enti sottoposti a controllo in applicazione della legge 21 marzo 1958, n. 259. Ente Nazionale per l'Artigianato e le Piccole Industrie (Esercizi 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965 e 1966). Comunicata alla Presidenza il 18 gennaio 1968*, s.l.: Stabilimenti Tipografici Carlo Colombo.

- Simoncini, F. (1981), 'La politica sociale e sindacale', *Annali dell'economia italiana*, X (1946-1952), t. 1, Milano: Ipsoa, pp. 446-447.
- Spadavecchia, A. (2005), 'Financing Industrial Districts in Italy, 1971-91: A Private Venture?', *Business History*, 47 (4), 569-593.
- Togliatti, P. (1964), 'Ceto medio e Emilia rossa', *Critica marxista*, 2 (4-5), 130-158.
- Toniolo, G. (1951), *Osservazioni e discussioni durante le Giornate sociali di Milano. Resoconto delle Giornate sociali di Milano (7-9 febbraio 1907)*, Città del Vaticano: Edizione del Comitato Opera omnia di G. Toniolo.
- Weiss, L. (1988), *Creating Capitalism. The State and Small Business since 1945*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Zamagni, V. (1979), 'L'economia artigiana nell'Italia contemporanea', in Aa.Vv., *Storia dell'artigianato italiano*, Milano: Etas Libri, pp. 232-255.