

# **Il percorso storico della statistica nell'Italia Unita**

**Workshop**  
**Roma, 7 giugno 2011**  
Istat, aula magna

## **The originality of Italian statistics: genesis, structure and logic of a scientific field**

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From the early 20th century up to World War II, Italian statistics distinguished itself by a series of consistent and original scientific contributions, its hegemonic position with regard to social science, and the political context in which it developed. By contrast with other countries where, during the same period, mathematical statistics, official statistics and social science were progressively becoming quite distinctive intellectual spheres, the Italian situation was characterized by a significant effort to maintain very close relations between them and thus establish statistics as the architectonic of social-scientific knowledge. The concept of a “statistical field” offers a vantage point from which to understand the institutional-cum-intellectual developments that characterize Italian statistics during that period.

The presentation will first outline how this state of things can be understood partly as a result of the discipline’s properly scientific and academic development, but also as a consequence of the deep involvement of many Italian statisticians in various administrative-scientific activities – and, by extension, in political debates – during the Great War and its immediate aftermath. It will move on to describe how a number of specific features (concurrent drawing of positions, redefinition of the scientific division of labour, alliances with resource providers, polarization and competition between groups, reproduction of alignments) have defined the structure and logic for the next two decades.

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