

Adding Meaning to Numbers in the Censis Report

Villa Vigoni 23th March 2009

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Summary

- 1. Origin and history of Censis Report**
- 2. Adding meaning to numbers in social reporting and social research**
- 3. Adding meaning to numbers in Censis Report**

Part 1

Origin and history of Censis Report

A 45 years long story in Italy

- Censis **RESEARCH INSTITUTE** 1964 – 2009
- Censis **FOUNDATION** 1973 – 2009
- More than 1,000 **PROJECTS**
- Hundreds of **CLIENTS**, public and private
- Acknowledgement of quality and **TRADITION**

Principal areas of research

- **EDUCATION:** school, university, life-long learning, training evaluation.
- **LABOUR MARKET** and organisation, underground economy, professions, representative bodies and associations.
- **WELFARE** policies, including pensions and social policy, **HEALTHCARE** system and lifestyles.
- **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT** and economic processes, economic districts, entrepreneurial strategies.

- ***THE TERRITORY***, environment, territorial policies, real estate and local institutions.
- ***CULTURAL POLICIES AND MODELS***, with special reference to the family, children, young people, the elderly, women and migrants, Mass media and communication processes.
- ***INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES***, innovation processes and e-government.
- ***SECURITY, SOCIAL IMPACT OF LEGAL POLICIES***, deviance, unauthorised migrants flows, trafficking of human beings.

Main Issues addressed

- Living conditions and demand
- Processes and results of policy-making
- Involvement of stakeholders
- Management of public policies
- Role of institutional bodies, enterprises, associations and families

Censis annual Report on the Social Situation of the Country (1966 – 2009)

➤ **FROM THE BEGINNING A WORK OF ADDED VALUE AND MEANINGS:**

- * To summarise the year's researches
- * To explore new trends
- * To adopt an interdisciplinary approach
-and a cross-sector approach
- * To overcome the weakness of existing data
- * To communicate and gain trust
- * To produce evaluations and
recommendations

A traditional Structure

➤ **ALSO THE STRUCTURE F THE REPORT SHOWS THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERPRRTATION OF DATA**

➤ **3 Parts:**

➤ **A. General Considerations**

➤ **B. The year's phenomena**

➤ **C. 8 sectoral Chapters (same as above)**

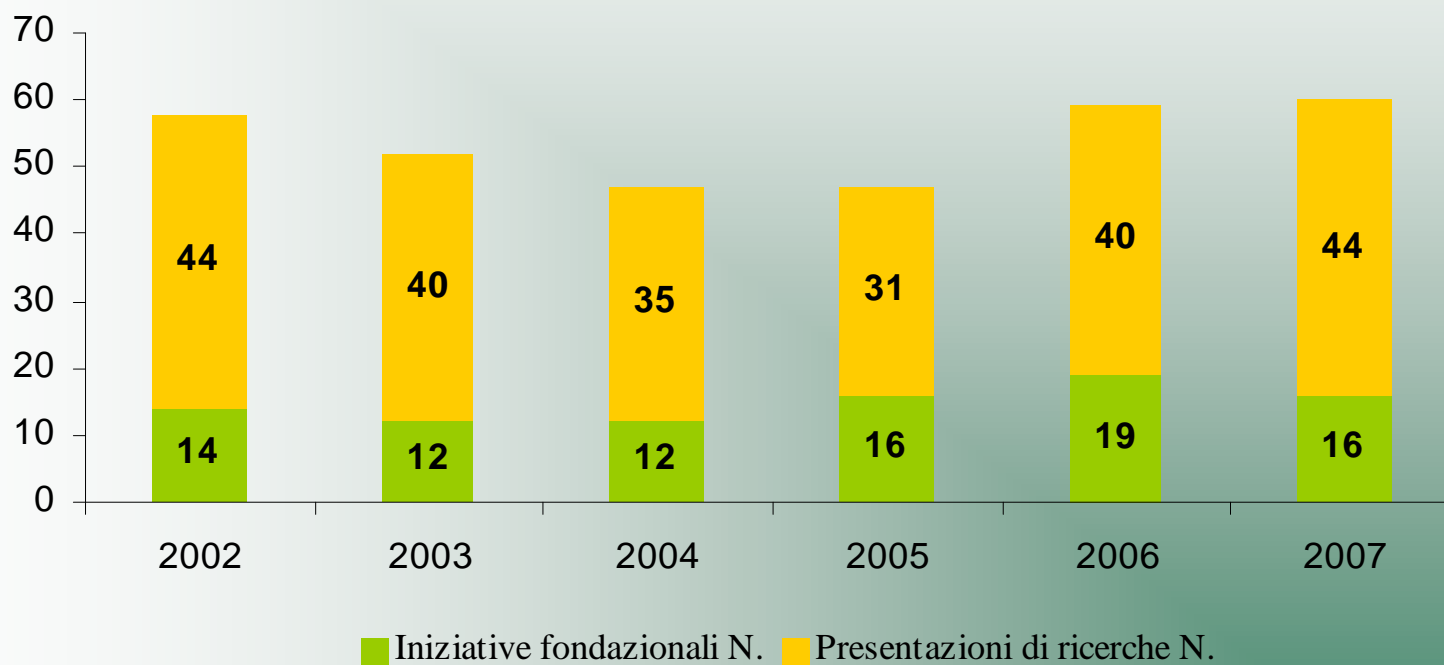
Each sectoral Chapter:

➤ **Themes of the year**

➤ **Phenomena of the year**

➤ **Statistical indicators**

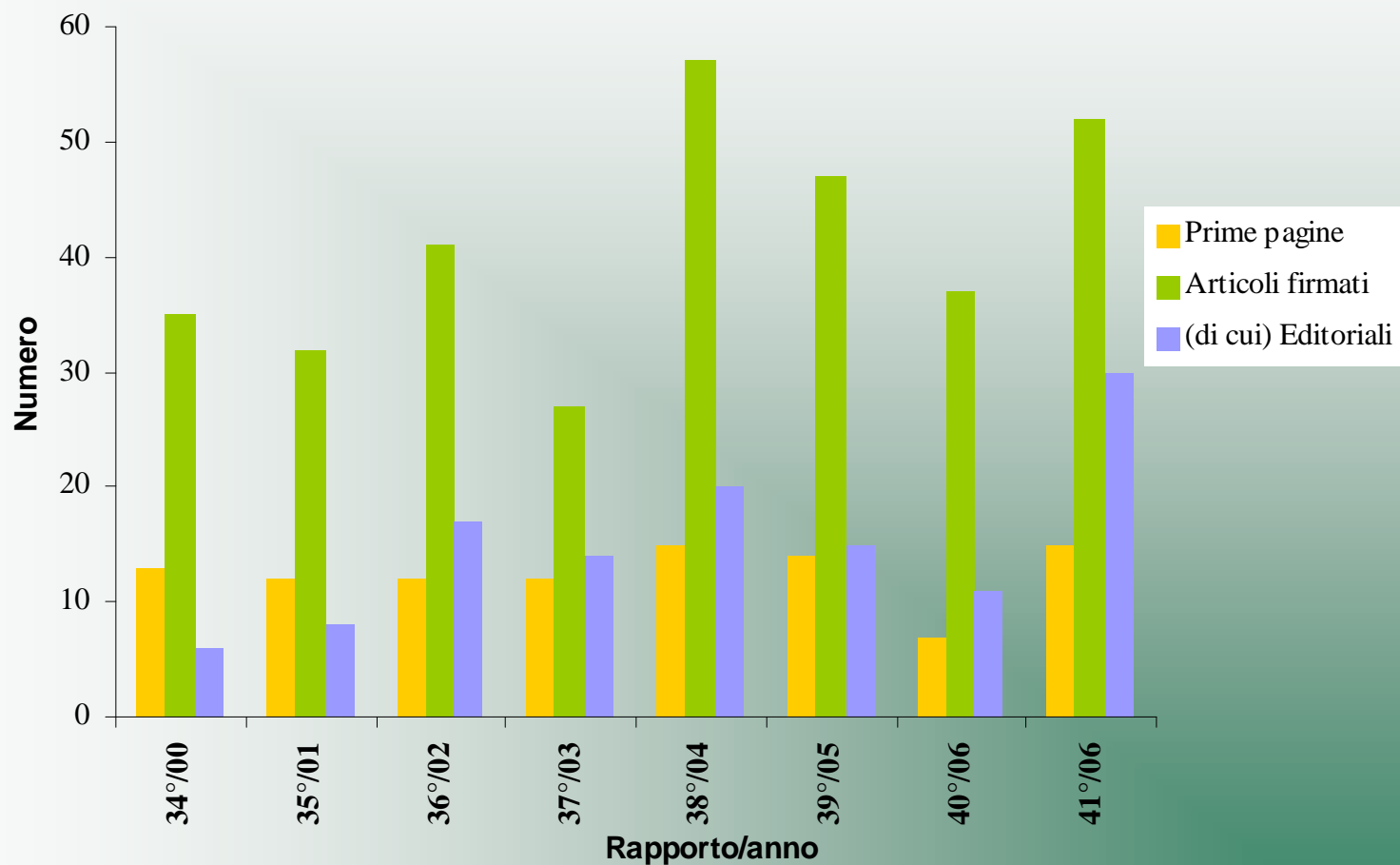
The role of communication of data, results, meanings (Censis public initiatives)



Impact on the media of Censis work

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Newspaper's articles (signed)	3.295	3.284	3.182	3.080
TV reports	592	595	530	542
Radio reports	241	251	204	190
Total	225	217	212	186
	3.761	3.752	3.598	3.456

Impact on newspapers of the Annual Report



Censis Report and Zuma Report: (prof. Habich 2006)

Censis: Chaos and courage	Zuma: Systematic and heavy
For an élite (6.000)	For society (40.000)
Agenda setting (for policy makers)	Political education
Italy	Europe
Translated in english (Italy Today)	Only german
Surveys	Official data and national panel
Not so many official data (a choice)	Description and many official data
Self referent	More subjects involved
Previsional scenarios	More explanation
Not easy to apply in other contents	Easy to reproduce
Under effort	Relaxed

Part 2

Adding meaning to
numbers in social reporting
and social research

The prevalence of socio-economic approaches in social research

Diacronic
trend in
methodological
approach

of today social research in Italy (and not only in Italy)

+
socio economic
research

-
socio antropological
research

SOCIO ECONOMIC RESEARCH WEAKNESS

- Prevalent attention to material, concrete aspects of life
- Big number of statistical indicators
- Big investments in complex econometric and statistical index
- Tendance to describe and not to explain
- Underevaluation of immaterial aspects in the life of individues

New trends in the last 20 years

- Increase of extra UE **IMMIGRATION** emphasises the differences of cultures and religions
- **GLOBALIZATION** produces necessity to understand the others

- Growth of **WOMEN** Role in the society brings different points of view of life
- Progressive laicization of behaviours putting in crise the traditional patterns

- **MASS MEDIA** development increases the knowledge and the challenge of different way of life
- Increase of **MOBILITY** (studies, job) put in contact with different styles of life and values

KNOW HOW IN MIXING INSTRUMENTS AND POINT OF VIEWS OF DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES TO UNDERSTAND SOCIETY

history

anthropology

social psychology

economy

literature

sociology

and

**MORE QUALITATIVE MEHODOLOGIES
MORE INTERPRETATION
MORE CONNECTIONS
MORE EXPLANATIONS
MORE FUTURE**

SOCIETY IS LIKE HUMAN BEING:

- @ IS COMPLEX**
- @ HAS MANY SIDES**
- @ IS CONTRADICTORY**

AND

**NEEDS NEW APPROACH IN SOCIAL
RESEARCH**

An example: anthropological characteristics of the multimedia consumer

Tratti antropologici del nomade multimediale

Autodidatta	In genere non segue corsi di formazione, impara per tentativi ed errori, o confrontandosi con amici e colleghi
Anarchico	Non si accontenta di una fonte autorevole e comunque le prende in considerazione in maniera istintuale
Spregiudicato	Non si pone troppi problemi di coerenza e trasparenza (doppie e triple vite)
Esplorativo	È un tratto strutturante della psicologia del nomade, senza questa caratteristica non potrebbe esistere
Relazionale	La rete è “filosoficamente” il suo humus, non potrebbe navigare senza disponibilità alla relazione
Indipendente	Verifica diagnosi e terapie sul web, si confronta con gli altri pazienti, non accetta supinamente l'autorità del medico
Veloce	Anche se passa ore davanti al computer lo fa “in velocità”, perché l'immensità dell'offerta suscita inevitabilmente curiosità
Superficiale	L'ingordigia di informazioni e esperienze multimediali gli impedisce tecnicamente l'approfondimento
Relativista	Non essendo verticale, gerarchico, tende ad attribuire una qualche credibilità a ogni fonte, per lo meno in fase preliminare
Infedele	Accumula esperienze, se si fidelizza non è per sempre
Orizzontale	Viaggia, fa <i>surfing</i> tra un sito e l'altro
Sensitivo	Si affida alle sensazioni e all'intuito per scegliere e selezionare

Fonte: elaborazioni Censis su dati e ricerche Istat, Censis, Media 2000

Part 3

Adding meaning to numbers in Censis Report

Italian society in 2006 Report

A “small silent boom”



Driven by a minority



But... faraway from political choices (rhetorical involution)

Italian society in 2007 Report

Development continues, but society suffers

- **NICHE ECONOMY**, high market segments, relocalization of production
- **SOUTHERN ITALY** remains outside
- **SOCIAL DIFFERENCES** become bigger
- Economic **VULNERABILITY** of families grows
- **LOW POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

An “electronic” and “Bourbonist” country

INNOVATION in terms of consumption,
quality of life, aggregation, internationalisation

TRADITIONALISM in terms of productive
localism, the family, conflict within the
institutions

Italian society in 2008 Report

Phase of rising FEARS, of different types and importance.

MASS MEDIA'S EXPLOITATION through endless fear-evoking stories.

Need of a new METAMORPHOSIS, after the “big-one” in 1945-1975, when Italy transformed the indescribable difficulties in development and success

Avoid Implosion through metamorphosis

*“... the difficulties we face today, in a less dramatic context than at that time, can be a useful challenge for us, in that they can help us **AVOID THE IMPLOSION** we felt was so close a year ago, and spark off processes of far-reaching change (...) they can push us towards a **SECOND METAMORPHOSIS**, perhaps already silent underway, hidden in the shadows like all the innovative processes”.*

A neologism “Ex-aptation”

“In biology, where there is a more in-depth examination of evolutionary processes, the traditional term AD-APTATION (to be coherent with what happens) is contrasted with the term EX-APTATION, to indicate a non-automatic process of adaptation made essential and incisive by an external factor, a chemical reactant, a stimulus for transformation. More a process of metamorphosis than pure adaptation.”

(Exaptation, bricolage of Evolution, by S.J.Gould & E.S. Vrba)

External Inputs for ex-aptation

- ~ IMMIGRANTS, their demographic vitality and their emulative reproduction of the entrepreneurial spirit;
- ~ VIBRANT MINORITY (small and medium-sized commercial and financial players)
- ~ growth in the **TERRITORY'S COMPETITIVENESS**
- ~ a propensity towards **MODERATE AND MEASURED CONSUMPTION** and behaviour
- ~ the passage moving to a **MIXED ECONOMY** combining both public and private economic entities (foundations, banking groups, utilities, etc.)
- ~ **INNOVATION IN GEO-POLITICAL TRENDS**, reduction in western "dominance"

Phenomena of the year in Italian Society addressed in 2008 Report

- ~ The non-cyclic nature of Italy's **ECONOMIC SYSTEM**
- ~ The overall staying power of **ENTERPRISES**
- ~ Italian households and their **SELF-PROTECTION STRATEGIES**
- ~ **MODERATE CONSUMPTION** guarantees a **GOOD LIFESTYLE**
- ~ Increasing **GLOBAL PLAYERS**
- ~ From immigrants to **NEW ITALIANS**
- ~ **WOMEN's** increasing role in society
- ~ Living together in the **MEGA-CITIES**
- ~ We, **"DIGITAL MUTANTS"**
- ~ The **SOUTH**: two territories, one nation
- ~ Neither with the state, nor the market: Italians' disoriented **POLYCENTRISM**
- ~ The hazards of **"DEVALUED EMPLOYMENT"**
- ~ The Italians' **"UNORTHODOX NORMALITY"**
- ~ The ambiguous power of **EVENTS** (public squares, cultural and political events)

2008 Report: a good example of strong emphasis on interpretation

- * Counter-current, counter balanced
- * Positive thinking, looking for way out from the crisis
- * Building social confidence and initiative
- * See the connection between different phenomena
- * **In one word: adding meaning to numbers**

An example: families difficulties in the crisis, the 2 extreme situations

Consumptions: gli indenni (no problems) e i penalizzati (problems)

<i>Indenni</i>	<i>Penalizzati</i>
5.536.000	881.000
30-44enni	Anziani <i>single</i>
Famiglie senza figli e <i>single</i>	Coppie con almeno 2 figli
Residenti in comuni tra 10 mila e 30 mila abitanti	Residenti in comuni tra 30 mila e 100 mila abitanti
Redditi alti e medi	Basso livello di scolarità e basso reddito

Fonte: indagine Censis, 2008

Thank you for the attention!

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