

## A BRIEF STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITALIAN JOINT-STOCK COMPANIES OVER THE PAST HUNDRED YEARS

For a considerable time Italian joint-stock companies developed hand in hand with the growth of trade and industrialization of the country. Yet, if one considers the number of joint-stock companies established, wound up and in existence in each year during the period from 1872 to the present day, the hayday of this kind of company seems to be over, at least from a numerical point of view.

With the trend towards greater corporate size brought about particularly by mergers, which is a direct consequence of the need for more massive investment in new technologies and widening market opportunities, the number of joint-stock companies in Italy is likely to grow even more slowly in the future.

Appropriate graphs are used to provide a statistical interpretation of this trend, and a constructive critical appraisal of conventional methods used hitherto to analyse this pseudo-demographic variable is included.