A laboratory for Latin eugenics: the Italian Committee for the Study of Population Problems and the international circulation of eugenic knowledge, 1920s-1940s

Um laboratório para eugenia latina: o Comitê Italiano para Estudo dos Problemas da População e a circulação internacional do conhecimento eugênico, décadas de 1920-1940

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to shed light on the rise to international prominence of the Italian statistician and eugenicist Corrado Gini and his appointment as the inaugural president of the Latin International Federation of Eugenic Societies in October 1935. It explores the numerous pioneering, still little known, investigations he undertook with a few Italian scientists and some foreign scholars, in order to analyze the role played by "isolation," and "racial hybridization" in the formation and degeneration of human races. After outlining Gini's professional and political trajectory, the article focuses on the scientific expeditions launched by the Italian Committee for the Study of Population Problems between 1933 and 1940 under his stewardship.

Keywords: latin eugenics; population sciences; history of anthropology; Corrado Gini (1884-1965); statistics.

Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é mostrar a projeção internacional do estatístico e eugenista italiano Corrado Gini e sua nomeação como presidente inaugural da Federação Latina Internacional de Sociedades Eugênicas em outubro de 1935. Examina várias pesquisas pioneiras, ainda pouco conhecidas, que Gini, alguns cientistas italianos e outros estrangeiros empreenderam a fim de analisar o papel do "isolamento" e da "hibridização racial" na formação e degeneração de raças humanas. Após apresentar a trajetória profissional e política de Gini, o artigo concentra-se nas expedições científicas lançadas pelo Comitê Italiano para Estudo dos Problemas da População, entre 1933 e 1940, sob sua direção.

Palavras-chave: *eugenia latina; ciências da população; história da antropologia; Corrado Gini (1884-1965); estatística.*

The establishment of the Latin International Federation of Eugenic Societies in October 1935 owed a great deal to Central and South American physicians and scientists. The result of a series of meetings held in Mexico and Argentina in the early 1930s, its creation was announced by Josué Beruti (a prominent Argentinian obstetrician) in his presentation at the second Conferencia Panamericana de Eugenesia y Homicultura de las Repúblicas Americanas that met in Buenos Aires in November 1934. The introductory meeting took place in Mexico City, in September of the following year, during a recess of the VII Congresso Panamericano del Niño (MacLean y Estenós, 1951; García González, Álvarez Peláez, 1998, p.220 *et seq*.). Although eugenics organizations from France, Romania, Catalonia and the francophone parts of Belgium and Switzerland had been contacted in advance and had expressed an interest in the plan (Turda, Gillette, 2014, p.174), it remained largely a Latin American initiative. Nonetheless, when it came to electing the president of the new-born Federation, the delegates assembled in Mexico City chose to put their trust in Corrado Gini, an Italian statistician turned eugenicist who was not even present. The high esteem in which Latin American intellectuals of that generation hold European culture must have weighed heavily in the decision; notwithstanding, it remains to be explained why they picked an Italian statistician as their figurehead.[1] That is: why an Italian eugenicist, and why a statistician? One might have imagined that an international movement dominated by physicians would have been more inclined to elect one of a number of French clinicians whose works on hereditary diseases had been widely read across Latin America since the late nineteenth century: someone like Eugène Apert, for example, who actually succeeded Gini to the presidency of the Federation in 1937. Alternatively, if they were that enthralled by the promises of the "New Italy," advertised by Mussolini and his supporters on all continents, why did they not set their sights on Nicola Pende, the world-famous champion of biotypology, a crucial scientific component of that so-called "Latin eugenics" which they aimed to establish on the international scene?

The aim of this article is to shed light on the process that turned Corrado Gini into the foremost leader of an international movement established to defend and promote an allegedly specific approach to eugenics. In particular, I shall explore the pioneering, and still little known, investigations in population sciences that he undertook during the 1930s, together with fellow Italian statisticians, physicians, anthropologists and a number of colleagues from various countries. Altogether, their research conferred some scientific legitimacy to the notion that environment and heredity interacted in a much more complex, sophisticated way than the British, American, German and Scandinavian "apostles of heredity" who dominated the International Federation of Eugenic Organizations[2] were willing to concede. After highlighting some key aspects of Gini's professional and political trajectory, I will detail the peculiarities of the research organization that served as a vehicle for his pioneering research on the "cyclical theory of population," namely the Italian Committee for the Study of Population Problems (Comitato Italiano per lo Studio dei Problemi della Popolazione, CISP). After examining the theoretical background of their activities, I will explore both the scientific, political and practical aspects of the ten expeditions they launched between 1933 and 1940, and explain why and how they enhanced Gini's stature among European and Latin-American eugenicists.

A brief portrait of a multidimensional social agent

Corrado Gini was born in 1884 in Motta di Livenza, a small market town in the province of Treviso.[3] Both his parents came from wealthy families, part of the agrarian upper class that had long dominated local affairs in this rich, rural area located in the north-eastern part of Italy. Both families owned numerous landed estates scattered around the Veneto and Friuli regions. Corrado Gini attended the "Liceo classico" in Treviso, obtaining excellent marks in every subject, before entering the University of Bologna, the oldest and, at that time, most prestigious academic institution in the country. There, he attended the faculty of law, where he read a wide range of subjects: in Italy, as in many other European countries at the time, law faculties acted as incubators for a series of new disciplines, ranging from political science to economics, and related fields of knowledge, such as statistics. In fact, it was through the study of economics that Gini became interested in statistics, which became his life-long passion. This was a time of great expectations when it came to "numerical methods," as the pioneering innovations introduced by the likes of Karl Pearson and a growing number of scholars from a variety of disciplines (from mathematics to economics to natural sciences) were rapidly expanding the frontiers of the field (Gigerenzer et al., 1989). By allowing for a thorough, quantitative analysis of all kinds of phenomena (social as well as natural), the highly versatile nature of this new, inferential statistics proved especially attractive to students and scholars whose interests encompassed different areas of knowledge. This was certainly the case for Gini, who continued to explore new domains and began attending classes in anthropology, biology, and mathematics. His multifarious curiosity did not slow him in his studies, on the contrary: in 1905, at the comparatively young age of 21, he was awarded a *laurea* – the highest diploma presented by Italian universities at the time – and could start calling himself a *Dottore*.

Among the many career options that were open to the tiny social elite of male *laureati* at the time, Gini opted for academia. As early as 1908, he was awarded a *libera docenza* in statistics by a national commission, on the basis of his publication record: ten articles and essays that dealt with many different aspects of statistical methods (for a list of his publications, see L'attività..., 1957). *Libero docenti*, like *Privatdozenten* in German-speaking countries, were entitled to work in Italian universities as autonomous teachers of a specific topic. Gini was hired to lecture on statistics at the faculty of law of the University of Cagliari (the main town on the island of Sardinia) that same year, and it is another measure of his precocity that he was promoted to a professorship at the same university the following academic year. In 1913, he moved to the University of Padova, one of the most prestigious higher education institutions in the country. There, he founded the Institute of Statistics, while enlarging the range of his teaching to political economy and demography, which was then a new field of knowledge. In fact, Gini's expanding activities both within and outside of academia over the ten years he spent in Padova merit further investigation, as this was the time (from the eve of the First World War to the rise of fascism in 1922) when he first made a name for himself, both in Italy and abroad. Indeed, the reception of his series of publications on the measurement of "wealth concentration" (*concentrazione della ricchezza*) in modern societies won him growing international fame;[4] and, his role as the head of the statistics office of the

Ministry of War during the First World War and his participation in various intergovernmental commissions in charge of investigating the economic and demographic consequences of the conflict conferred upon him expert status in modern government.[5] His dual prominence as scholar and expert proved crucial in his "calling" (*chiamata*) by the University of Rome La Sapienza in 1924-1925, at a time when the new Fascist rulers, in their determination to revive the past grandeur of Rome, intended to provide their capital city with a world class *athenaeum*. Integral to their projects was the creation of a new kind of faculty entirely devoted to "political sciences," and whose aim was to train modern civil servants as much as to provide the government with a wide range of relevant expertise. Statistics ranked highly among what Italian sociologist Dario Padovan (1999) has called "strategic knowledge," and Gini was already widely regarded as one of its most prominent scholars and practitioners.[6]

It is fair to say that from 1924, when he started teaching at La Sapienza, to 1965, the year of his death, he contributed more than any other Italian statistician to the transformation of what had merely been a field of knowledge into a full-fledged academic discipline. By 1925, Gini already presided over the creation of the Institute of Statistics and Political Economy, which was responsible for providing students from both the Law Faculty and the newly created Faculty of Political Science with a grasp of quantitative methods. Two years later, the institute was upgraded to a "School," and given greater autonomy, a dedicated building, and a library, despite the fact that the previous year, a School of Statistics and Actuarial Sciences had been established within the Faculty of Science by Guido Castelnuovo, a highly-respected mathematician, and Francesco Paolo Cantelli, a mathematician turned actuarian. Gini even gained the edge on his mathematically trained colleagues in 1936, when the two schools were united under his headship into the Faculty of Statistical and Actuarial Sciences, covering every aspect of statistics: from probability theory to punch card technologies, to its different fields of application (Prevost, 2009, p.68-69).

Clearly, Gini's academic endeavors would not have proved so successful without some kind of political backing. In turn, the statistician supported Fascist rule, both through his writings (for example: Gini, 1927), in his official capacity as head of the Italian Statistics Bureau (from 1927 to 1932), and as advisor to Benito Mussolini on population policies. However his support was not unconditional. Crucial to Gini's indictment by the High Commission for Sanctions against Fascism in November 1944 was his participation in the Commission for the Study of Constitutional Reforms (better known as "Commission of the eighteen," or "Commission of the Solons"), established by Mussolini in 1925 with the aim of reshaping political institutions in accordance with the fascist creed.[7] Yet, even on this occasion the statistician publicly dissented from all other members and ended up as the sole signatory of a "minority report" (although surprisingly this did not stop the Fascist party from conferring him honorary membership). The late Anna Treves, pioneer and foremost historian of Italian population policies wittily encapsulated Gini's approach to politics, noting that:

> his was the attitude of the intellectual who gauges events and political decisions according to their correspondence with his own views and his own theories; this attitude gradually turned into some kind of obsession, fed by the overwhelming confidence he had in the superiority of his own thinking. He was a fascist, and a heartfelt fascist, inasmuch as he could see fascism as 'Ginian' (Treves, 2001, p.227-228).

In fact, when a Fascist official failed to align himself with "Ginianism," Gini could not refrain from expressing his disappointment. This happened even with Mussolini, who had appointed him as president of the Statistics High Council (Consiglio Superiore di Statistica, CSS) in 1926, and then as head of the newly created Central Statistics Institute of the kingdom of Italy (Istituto Centrale di Statistica, ISTAT) in 1929. Carl Ipsen (1996, p.80-88) has chronicled the gradual souring of the relationship between the *Duce* and his advisor on public statistics and population issues. Shortly after being made president of ISTAT, Gini adopted the habit of instructing mayors and other senior civil servants, without informing either the government or the prime minister's aides; a fact that "led him into conflict with at least the ministers of the interior, public works, national economy, foreign affairs, and finance" (p.82). While initially supportive of his ebullient chief statistician, Mussolini eventually grew tired of his huge ego and authoritarian traits (unfortunately for him, the *Duce* scored even higher on these two counts), and in February 1932 Gini was eventually pressured into resigning from his presidency (Bertaux, 1999).

Interestingly, however, Corrado Gini's fall from grace did not amount to a complete loss of power and influence on his part. As a matter of fact, he remained extremely active throughout the 1930s both in Italy and abroad, with results that quickly earned him a prominent position in an emerging field of major significance to eugenicists: population studies.

Eugenics by other means: Corrado Gini and the rise of population science

Although Corrado Gini is best remembered today as a statistician and demographer, it is no exaggeration to say that his interest in population statistics was entirely subordinated to his passion for eugenics, which went as far back as his student years in Bologna. In 1912, aged 28, Gini formed part of the Italian delegation to the first International Congress of eugenics, which was held in London that year. Seven years later, he contributed substantially to the inception of the Italian Society for Genetics and Eugenics (Società Italiana di Genetica ed Eugenetica), serving as its first vice-president, before being elected president in 1924 (Cassata, 2006a, p.144). This explains why, even when he was at the apex of his administrative career (from the late 1920s to 1932) and had to cope with a very taxing daily workload, Gini nevertheless dedicated a fair share of his time and energy to research on eugenic issues. He did so mostly in an (apparently) oblique way, by making important contributions to the new science of human population. The highly idiosyncratic organization he created for that purpose, the Italian Committee for the Study of Population Problems (Comitato Italiano per lo Studio della Popolazione, CISP) was seen as an instrument that would help demonstrate the validity of his "cyclical theory of population," and consequently legitimize an approach to eugenics that differed on many points from the orthodox views defended by what Gini persistently dismissed as a coterie of "Anglo-Saxon" and "Nordic" protestants, who unduly dominated the international scene (Cassata, 2011, p.188-192).

The Italian Committee was established in 1928 at the instigation of Corrado Gini, in the wake of the First World Population Conference held in Geneva the previous year on the initiative of Margaret Sanger, the famous neo-Malthusian and feminist activist.[8] Technically, CISP was nothing more than the Italian constituent member of the International Union for

the Scientific Investigation of Population Problems (IUSIPP), the creation of which had been advocated by Albert Thomas in his address to the Geneva conference (Connelly, 2008, p.71). Gini, however, managed to turn what was meant to be a mere small-scale administrative structure into an innovative research institution, thanks in no small part to Mussolini's support. Rather than the support itself,[9] what is striking when one looks at the first years of CISP's existence is the sheer scale of the support it enjoyed from the Regime. Gini had, in fact, persuaded the *Duce* that the new-born committee could become the perfect vehicle to fight the "Anglo-Saxon" hegemony in eugenic matters simultaneously on two fronts: by legitimizing an alternative to the neo-Malthusian approach to population studies favored by IUSIPP's leaders, while at the same time highlighting the shortcomings inherent in their views on heredity and eugenics.[10] As a result, Mussolini wrote to a vast array of ministerial departments, public organizations, commercial and cooperative banking institutions, and city councils, urging them to fund the activities of a Committee he had "happily agreed to serve as Honorary President." Building on nationalistic rhetoric, he turned the scientific investigations of the Committee into a matter of international competition, and ultimately an issue of national pride: "It is therefore crucial that the Italian Committee should be given ample means, which, although they could not match those available to the English [sic] committee or the American one, should nevertheless allow them to undertake studies and research that could stand the comparison with those of any other country" (Circolare..., 16 Feb. 1928, p.1).

Such was the ascendency of Mussolini in Fascist Italy that all the organizations that were contacted competed to please the *Duce* and pledged significant amounts of money to CISP. In some cases, the amount of money promised was so absurdly high that the *Duce* had to call upon public servants and bankers alike to calm their enthusiasm for population science.[11] Money flooded in so quickly and in such quantity[12] that the financial reserves accumulated during the first years of its existence allowed CISP to embark on an ambitious program of scientific investigations which went on well after Gini had fallen from Mussolini's grace, despite the criticisms of some of these very public organizations that had previously competed to appear on the list of the Committee's major financial sponsors.[13]

A first distinctive feature of the different investigations undertaken at CISP from its inception to the early 1940s was that they were all grounded in an overarching theoretical framework, in spite of the great diversity of the populations studied.

Turning degeneration around: a scientific research program with a political agenda

Predictably, Corrado Gini was the sole author of this unifying theory, which he called "the cyclical theory of populations." He started to work on his grand theory of the demographic rise and fall of human civilizations as early as 1909, and first expounded it in a monograph that came out three years later (Gini, 1912b), the year of the first international eugenics conference. He continued to promote it over the next decade (see, for example: Gini, 1915), and was finally able to bring it to a wider international audience in 1929, when he was invited to give a Norman Wait Harris lecture at the University of Chicago (Gini, 1930; Manfredi, Micheli, 2015). In summary, the entire theory rested on the central assertion that

every single human population always experienced a "slow exhaustion of [its] reproductive powers" over time (Gini, 1930, p.9), no matter how prolific it had been in its ascending years. "Neo-Malthusians" were therefore wrong to claim that the availability of resources was the only natural limit to the growth of human populations; on the contrary, some kind of natural law constrained the development of even the most superior races. Despite claims to originality, Gini's was clearly only one among many organismic social theories that had sprung up since the mid-nineteenth century. Still, two aspects of his writings are worth noting, as they point to an interesting paradox: whereas radically biological, the demographic theory elaborated by the young Italian statistician was less deterministic and, therefore, less pessimistic than many organismic analyses of human societies already in circulation.

Whereas Vilfredo Pareto explained the ineluctable degeneration of human civilizations in terms of the gradual "psycho-sociological exhaustion" of their elites, Gini pinned it down to a natural cause, as noted by Francesco Cassata (2006b, p.19, 2011, p.21-39). In this view, the differential fertility of social classes that had obsessed English eugenicists since the turn of the century was a consequence of the upper class being ahead of the working class "along the parabola of their evolution" (Gini, 1930, p.25). However, his "pessimismo degenerazionista" (Cassata, 2006b, p.21) was somehow balanced by the regenerative possibilities he saw in two complementary demographic processes: tamed upward social mobility, when a limited amount of ascending lower-class agents regenerated the debilitated reproductive power of the upper class as they joined it; and controlled migrations, since a limited influx of "new races" could (in some cases) regenerate the debilitated reproductive power of "older populations," who had already reached the end of their own cycle. This clearly singled Gini out from the other "prophets of doom" of his time, such as Herbert Spencer or Oswald Spengler, even if he always insisted that such a demographic regeneration would only occur if certain conditions were met. When it came to migrations, for example, the result of racial hybridization (positive or negative) always depended on the respective qualities of the races involved. This is when CISP came into the picture.

The aim of the Italian Committee for the Study of Population Problems, as set out by its president in various international publications from 1928 onwards, was precisely "to study with great attention the modalities and, when possible, the causes that led to the degeneration and the gradual disappearance of some races, as well as the causes behind the formation and flourishing of new races, almost entirely unknown to us" (Gini, 1928, p.205).[14] In fact, the main limitation of population studies, according to Gini lay in the fact that all available vital statistics only covered Western countries, and no statistical series went back further than "a century or a century and a half" (depending on countries). As a result, all the existing, truthful statistical documentation relating to human populations only dealt with "races" that were "in a period [sic; phase] which may be compared to adult life in an individual" (Gini, 1934; respectively p.1 and p.5). To elucidate the causes of both the "senescence" and "regeneration" of human populations, one would have to enlarge the scope of the investigation to include other "human races," caught "at different stages of their demographic evolution" (Gini, 1934, p.5; see also Gini, 1928, p.205). CISP's answer to this scientific challenge, made explicit from the very start of their activity, was to undertake as many field studies as possible into allegedly "isolated" and (often) "primitive" populations. This, in turn, required more than

mere statistical expertise; it implied bridging the gap between various disciplines, such as demography, biology, anthropology, geography, history, and medicine, so as to produce a new kind of knowledge: a totalizing science of population.[15]

The fact that this new, overarching science of population would be integral to eugenics was also made clear from the start, by the Italian scientists gathered around Corrado Gini. Indeed, they saw their research as a way of challenging the despised "eugenic orthodoxy" promoted by their Northern European and Northern American colleagues on the two main issues at stake. First, one of the stated reasons for investigating "isolated" populations was to shed light on the risks associated with "neo-Malthusian practices": according to Gini, birth control advocates could be "compared to that of a gambler playing high stakes with scanty reserves"[16] (Gini, 1934, p.12). Second, such investigations were also laid out as the only practical way to shed some real light on the interplay between heredity and environment, and determine what part each factor played in the rise and fall of human races. By comparing the characteristics of populations of the same race living in different conditions, on the one hand, and the effects of different kinds of racial admixtures happening in more or less similar conditions on the other, Italian scientists would be able to assess the respective role played by each of the two influences. The eugenic conundrum would finally be resolved. However, this was more easily said than done.

The difficulties started early on, when it came to setting the terms of the debate. Going through CISP's numerous publications (especially Gini's) one notices the unusually cautious tone used to set forth what one might call a "Latin eugenicist" position on the issue. Gini was always aware of his scientific respectability, and could not possibly reject Mendelism altogether. He therefore never went further than stressing the limitations of the Mendelian approach to heredity, adding (as many French, Italian and other "Latin" eugenicists before him) that inheritance could not possibly be explained entirely in terms of monogenic (recessive or dominant) principles. For the same reason, he also sometimes felt compelled to distance himself from the most criticized aspects of neo-Lamarckism, without shunning it altogether. To get around the difficulty, Gini resorted to the old medical notion of "diathesis" (an innate predisposition, see Olby, 1993) as early as 1924, and gradually developed a full-fledged theory, which he encapsulated in the title: "the theory of the continuous reinforcement of inherited functional diathesis and – if I may call it this way – of environmental diathesis" (Gini, 1938, p.168). The whole elaboration on the possibility of a "continuous reinforcement" of "inherited diathesis over generations," in response to persistent environmental pressures (lasting for hundreds, if not thousands, of years) seemed to have been an attempt at refashioning otherwise widely rejected concepts, punctuated by such statements as: "If, in truth, one does not fathom how it would be possible to inherit discrete acquired characteristics, on the contrary one can easily comprehend how the regular use (or, on the contrary, the disuse) of an organ can induce in offspring a predisposition to similar characteristics, through the transmission of functional diathesis" (Gini, 1938, p.166). According to him, such a transmission could explain, for example: "such a widely observed phenomenon as the increasing intellectual precociousness in children, that comes with the reinforcement of culture in modern times" (p.167).

In the end, CISP's investigators grounded their analysis in a theoretical framework articulated around a medical concept that had been central to countless debates on the respective role of constitution and environment in modelling individuals since the first half of the nineteenth century.

The scientific expeditions

Looking at the activity of the Italian Committee in the 1930s, one can only be struck by the number and scale of expeditions they mounted, as well as the variety of places they visited. From 1933 to 1940, a dozen Italian scientists and their students, seconded in the field by a few anthropologists and physicians recruited locally, launched no less than ten expeditions to study populations who lived either in Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, South Africa, and Central America. On the eve of the Second World War, the overall number of individuals studied in the field was in the thousands.

In all the numerous publications detailing the results of these investigations that came out from the mid-1930s onwards,[17] Gini and his collaborators always presented all the different studied populations as falling into two different categories: seven of them were grouped under the umbrella term of "primitive populations;" whereas the remaining three, which were all based in Italy, were defined as "ethnic islands" (*isole etniche*). The latter were communities from different origins, who had relocated to Italy for various reasons, between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries (see below). That seven out of ten expeditions had aimed to study "primitive people" merely confirms how central "primitivity"[18] had become to their research, as a key to understand the making and unmaking of human races. More interesting, perhaps, is the stress put on the alleged "isolation" of the populations studied in their reports on the ten different expeditions, as if demographic isolation magnified traits that were otherwise imperceptible in normal circumstances. Still, however important human isolates were for the study of human degeneration, they could not possibly shed any light on the emergence of new races. This is why Italian population scientists developed a complementary interest in the study of "racial hybridization" (*ibridazione razziale*).

Another surprising aspect of this rather frenetic research activity is that some of the places visited during these expeditions were far away (literally speaking) from the traditional avenues of colonial science. This is not to say that Italian colonies were left entirely out of the picture; however, these visits were limited to three different trips to Libya (Italy had seized Tripolitania and Cyrenaica from the Ottoman armies during the war of 1911 to 1912). CISP's inaugural investigation took place in the winter of 1933, in Tripolitania (North of Libya), where they studied a series of "Bedouin tribes" in collaboration with the Royal Italian Geographical Society (Gini, Federici, 1943, p.6-9). Then, two years later, the Italian population scientists went to Southwestern Libya in order to study the Dawada, an endogamous group who lived in the Fezzan region, around the oasis of Gabr'On (modern Gabraoun), and spoke their own Arabic dialect. Finally, they travelled back to Libya, in 1937, to research the Berbers of Jadu, in the "Gebel Nefusa" (Nafusa Mountains). Besides the case of Italian-administered territories, one other expedition, namely the 1935 investigation into the Bantu people of Natal[19] in South

Africa, displayed all the characteristics of traditional colonial science. Still, three other field trips were undertaken in very different places.

CISP's second scientific expedition aimed to investigate the situation of the Samaritans in Palestine and lasted from 18 March to 18 April 1933. The endogamous isolation allegedly maintained by this community since Biblical times, the dramatic demographic shrinking that had resulted, and the recent decisions taken by some community leaders to condone (at least in some cases) marriages between Samaritans and Palestinian Jews made it a perfect case study on the dangers of interbreeding (Gini, Federici, 1943, p.9-11). The second population under study that maintained a strict demographic isolation for religious and cultural reasons were the "Karaite Jews" from Poland and Lithuania. Different groups from this community, whose origins had long been debated but that was generally regarded as a kind of Jewish sect, were studied between August and October 1934. However, CISP's larger and more ambitious expedition, by far, was undertaken in Mexico between August and December 1933, where five Italian researchers teamed up with a dozen Mexican anthropologists and physicians to investigate no less than 11 different Indian communities scattered all around the country.

Table 1: List of CISP expeditions, 1933-1940

Name of studied population	Country/Place	Timeline of the investigation	Kind of studied population	Number of individuals studied
The nomads of Tripolitania	Libya/Tripolitania	January-February 1933	"primitive"	1,073
The Samaritans of Palestine	Palestine and Cisjordania	March-April 1933	"primitive"	213
The Mexican Indians	Mexico (11 sites of investigation)	August-December 1933	"primitive"	1,904
The "Karaite jews"	Poland and Lithuania	August-October 1934	"primitive"	549
The Dawada	Libya/oasis of Fezzan	Spring 1935	"primitive"	425
The Bantu people	South Africa/Natal	Summer 1935	"primitive"	277
The Berbers of Jadu	Libya/Nafusa Mountains	September-October 1937	"primitive"	404
The "Albanians"	Italy/Calabria	August-October 1938	"ethnic island" ("isola etnica")	774
the "Ligurians" of Carloforte	Italy/Sardinia	August 1939	"ethnic island"	471
The "Piedmontese colony" of Calasetta	Italy/Sardinia	March-April 1940	"ethnic island"	222

Source: Archivio Gini, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome

Finally, there were the three investigations into the so called "ethnic islands." Although they were Italian populations, Gini and his collaborators undertook to study them in the same way they had studied "primitive people" living far away from their countries of origin. The first of these three expeditions was undertaken to shed light on the situation experienced by the so called "Albanians of Calabria:" communities who had fled the Ottomans, and

settled in this mountainous area of Southern Italy between the early-sixteenth and the mid-seventeenth century. This was followed by a study of the "Ligurians" of Carloforte, a fishing community who lived on the Sardinian island of San Pietro, on the west coast of Sardinia. These were the descendants of a Ligurian colony of fishermen and coral fishers who had settled on the Tunisian island of Tabarka in the 1540s, but eventually relocated to Sardinia between 1738 and 1742 under the joint pressure of Barbary pirates ("*piratti barbareschi*"), on the one hand, and the Bey of Tunis, on the other. The series finally ended with a last piece of research on the "Liguri-Piedmontesi" of Calasetta, another fishing community of Piedmontese descent, established on yet another island in the same Sardinian archipelago.

The scale of the different investigations obviously varied according to the size of the population that CISP intended to study. The smallest group studied was made up of the 213 living Samaritans, although in that case the fact that the Italian scientists and their Jewish-Palestinian collaborators had examined every single one of the living individuals of one of the most ancient communities on earth was a source of pride. At the other end of the scale, the largest expedition CISP ever launched focused on the "Mexican-Indian mestizos," where eleven communities amounting to a total of 1,904 individuals were duly examined in about four months.

However, gathering data on each population was not considered sufficient to fulfil CISP's objectives. A key issue was clearly to allow for meaningful comparisons between all these human isolates and "admixture zones." The challenge, in other words, was to bring to the study of remote populations a standard of quality in data gathering and a level of standardization that could only be found, at that time, in a few statistical bureaus around the world.

Studying populations in the wild: a matter of tools as much as of logistics

The decision to launch scientific expeditions far away from the Italian mainland and the Italian colonial territories came at a cost. For, whereas in six instances out of ten, Italian scientists enjoyed the logistical support of the Italian administration or the colonial machinery, in the four other cases they had to rely on go-betweens (Schaffer et al., 2009), whom they hired locally. These intermediaries were mostly scholars with different academic backgrounds: statisticians, anthropologists, physicians or historians (in the case of the Palestinian expedition), who proved essential in solving a wide range of problems: from liaising with local governments and public administrations to staffing research teams, while contributing their own knowledge of local populations to the research, and introducing the "visitors" to the "primitives" they had come to study.[20] Although the contribution of these "local colleagues" was always fully acknowledged in their publications, neither Gini nor his collaborators ever reflected on the influence they might have exerted on their understanding of each population. On the contrary, Italian scientists kept stressing the high level of standardization they had reached in documenting extremely different human "races."

A key dimension of this huge effort of standardization was the fact that all the data on the different populations had to be collected by using identical procedures. In the early 1930's, Gini and his aides therefore started to draft a series of three different questionnaires that

were to be filled in carefully on the spot by a trained scientist (who could either be one of the Italian investigators or a scientist recruited locally). These three *schede* (plural of *scheda*, the Italian for questionnaire) were fine-tuned and then printed in great quantities in 1932, in anticipation of the inaugural trip to Libya. They were duly "tested" in the field, in Tripolitania, during the winter of 1933, under Gini's direct supervision and, having proved satisfactory, were then used systematically in each of the successive expeditions that CISP organized subsequently. If required, the questionnaires were translated into a language spoken locally and printed for use by local collaborators: for example, Spanish, in the case of the Mexican expedition (Busta D.6, 1932-1946).

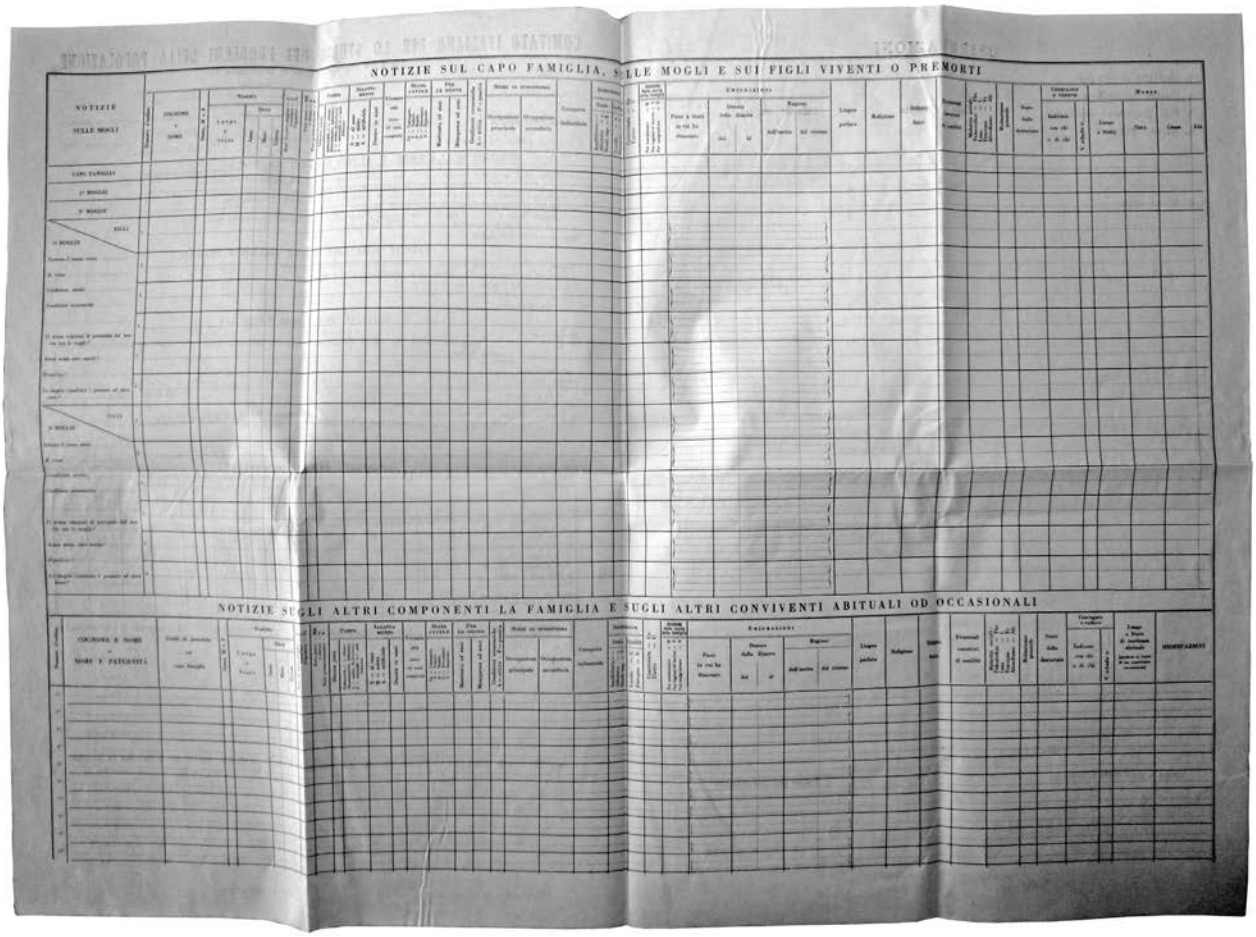


Figure 1: General overview of CISP demographic questionnaire (Archivio Gini, ACS, Rome)

The first of these quantifying tools, as one might call them, was a massive, extremely detailed "demographic questionnaire" (*scheda demografica*) spread across four pages in quarto. This specific form aimed at recording large quantities of information on every member of each extended family encountered during an investigation. It was therefore a "family questionnaire," as opposed to the two others, which had to be filled out for each individual member of the family.

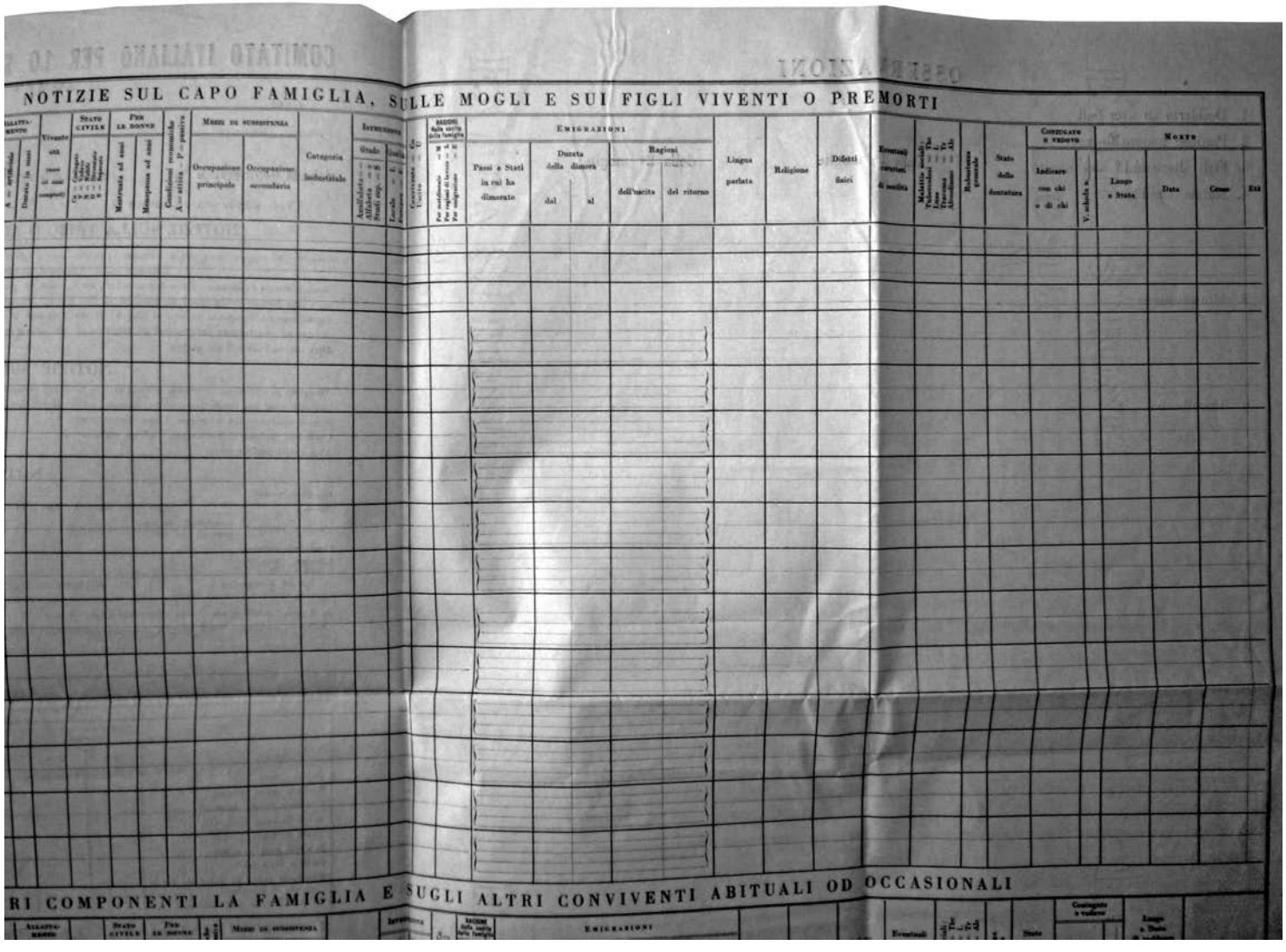
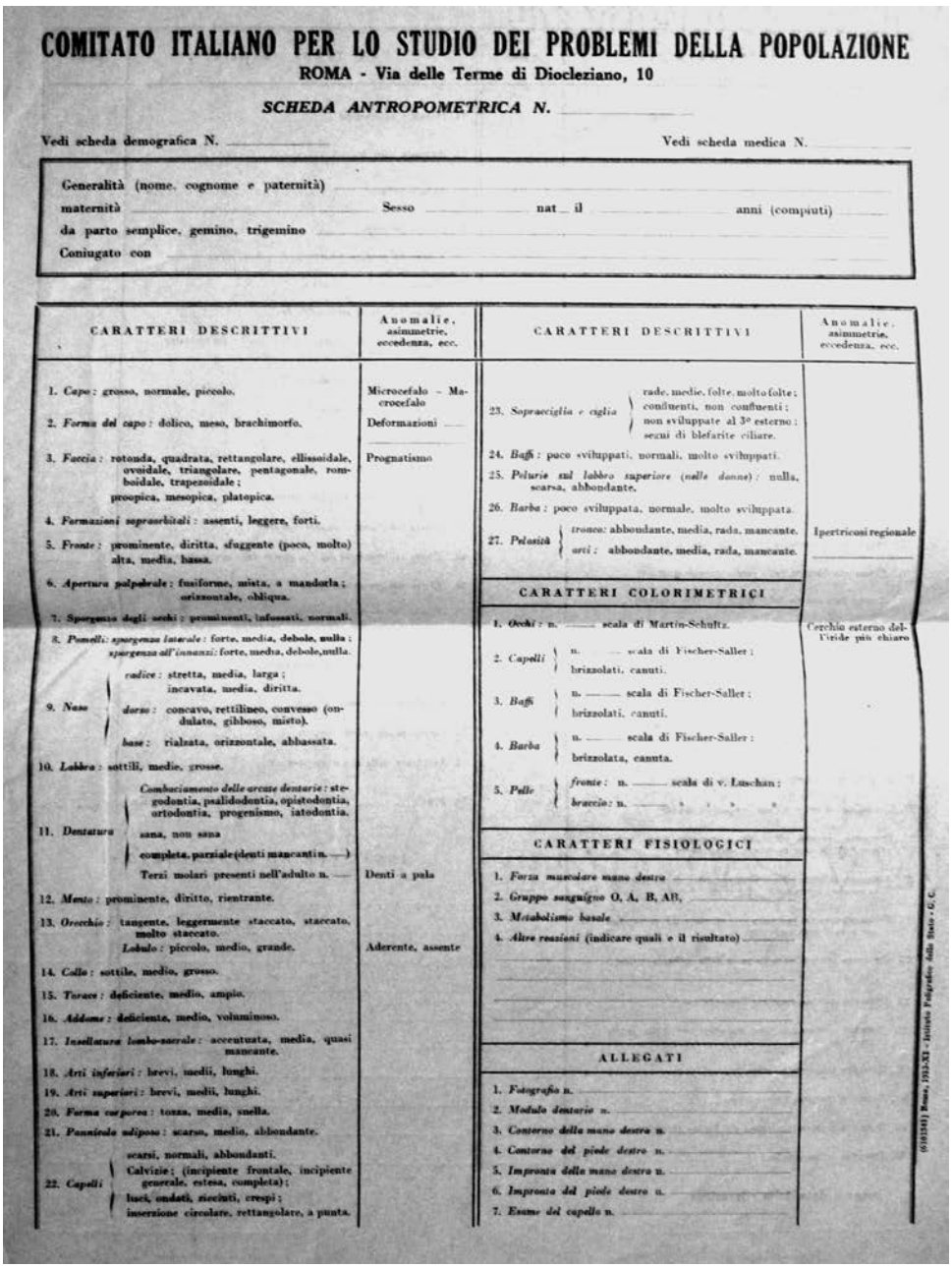


Figure 2: Detail of CISP demographic questionnaire (Archivio Gini, ACS, Rome)

One of the other *schede* was an "anthropological questionnaire" (*scheda antropologica*) that included no less than 59 different items. To fill it out, a trained researcher had to record every "classical" anthropometric measurement (height etc.), as well a whole series of alleged racial characteristics such as skin color, hair type and color, eye color, the type of eyebrows, body hair etc. (where appropriate, the questionnaire mentioned which specific color scale was to be used).



COMITATO ITALIANO PER LO STUDIO DEI PROBLEMI DELLA POPOLAZIONE

ROMA - Via delle Terme di Diocleziano, 10

SCHEDA ANTROPOMETRICA N. _____

Vedi scheda demografica N. _____ **Vedi scheda medica N.** _____

Generalità (nome, cognome e paternità) _____

maternità _____ **Sesso** _____ **nat_ il** _____ **anni** (compiuti) _____

da parto semplice, gemino, trigemino _____

Coniugato con _____

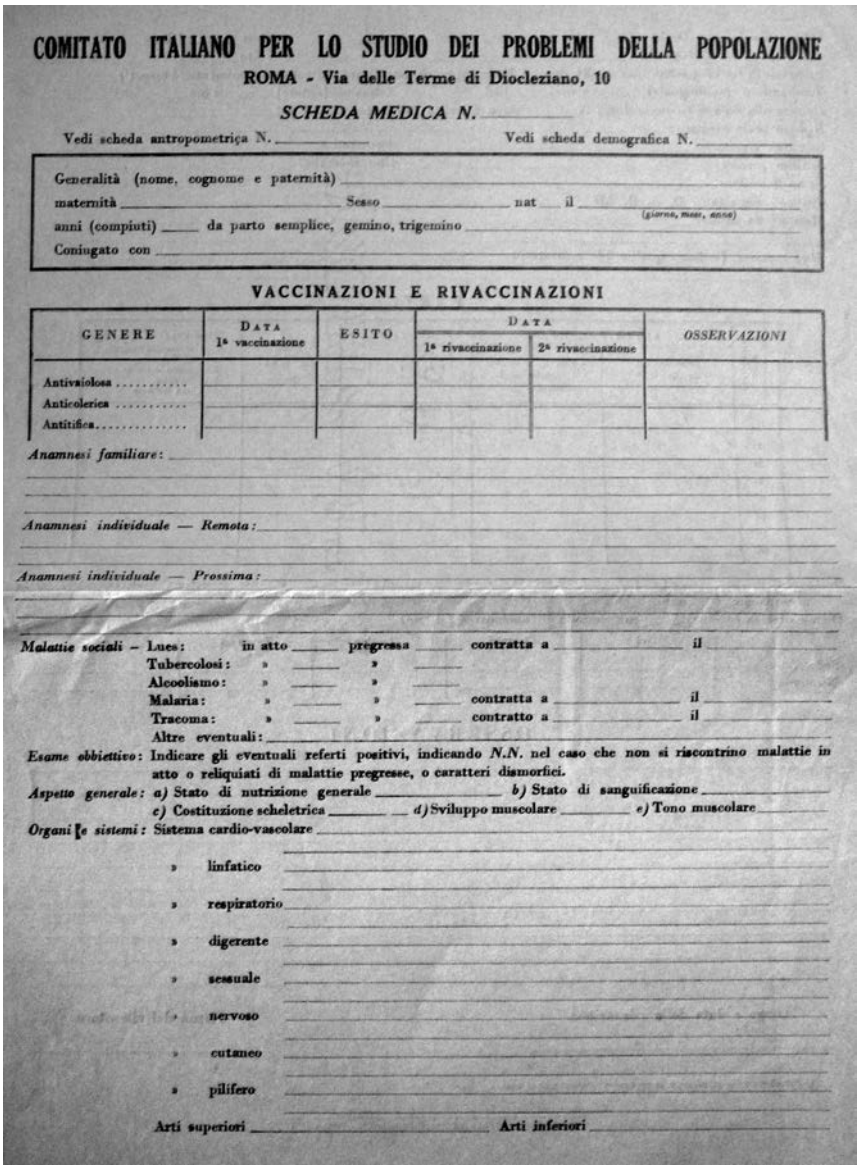
CARATTERI DESCRITTIVI	Anomalie, asimmetrie, eccedenza, ecc.
1. *Capo*: grosso, normale, piccolo.	Microcefalo – Macrocefalo
2. *Forma del capo*: dolico, meso, brachimorfo.	Deformazioni
3. *Faccia*: rotonda, quadrata, rettangolare, ellissoidale, ovoidale, triangolare, pentagonale, romboidale, trapezoidale; proopica, mesopica, platopica.	Prognatismo
4. *Formazioni sopraorbitali*: assenti, leggere, forti.	
5. *Fronte*: prominente, diritta, sfuggente (poco, molto) alta, media, bassa.	
6. *Apertura palpebrale*: fusiforme, mista, a mandorla; orizzontale, obliqua.	
7. *Sporgenza degli occhi*: prominenti, infossati, normali.	
8. *Pomelli*: *sporgenza laterale*: forte, media, debole, nulla; *sporgenza all'innanzi*: forte, media, debole, nulla.	
9. *Naso* — *radice*: stretta, media, larga; incavata, media, diritta. — *dorso*: concavo, rettilineo, convesso (ondulato, gibboso, misto). — *base*: rialzata, orizzontale, abbassata.	
10. *Labbra*: sottili, medie, grosse.	
11. *Dentatura* — *Combaciamento delle arcate dentarie*: stegodontia, psalidodontia, opistodontia, ortodontia, progenismo, iatodontia. — sana, non sana — completa, parziale (denti mancanti n. ___) — Terzi molari presenti nell'adulto n. ___	Denti a pala
12. *Mento*: prominente, diritto, rientrante.	
13. *Orecchio*: tangente, leggermente staccato, staccato, molto staccato. *Lobulo*: piccolo, medio, grande.	Aderente, assente
14. *Collo*: sottile, medio, grosso.	
15. *Torace*: deficiente, medio, ampio.	
16. *Addome*: deficiente, medio, voluminoso.	
17. *Insellatura lombo-sacrale*: accentuata, media, quasi mancante.	
18. *Arti inferiori*: brevi, medii, lunghi.	
19. *Arti superiori*: brevi, medii, lunghi.	
20. *Forma corporea*: tozza, media, snella.	
21. *Panniculo adiposo*: scarso, medio, abbondante.	
22. *Capelli* — scarsi, normali, abbondanti. — Calvizie; (incipiente frontale, incipiente generale, estesa, completa); — lisci, ondati, ricciuti, crespi; — inserzione circolare, rettangolare, a punta.	

CARATTERI DESCRITTIVI	Anomalie, asimmetrie, eccedenza, ecc.
23. *Sopracciglia e ciglia*: rade, medie, folte, molto folte; confluenti, non confluenti; non sviluppate al 3° esterno; segni di blefarite ciliare.	
24. *Baffi*: poco sviluppati, normali, molto sviluppati.	
25. *Peluria sul labbro superiore (nelle donne)*: nulla, scarsa, abbondante.	
26. *Barba*: poco sviluppata, normale, molto sviluppata.	
27. *Peluzzità* — *tronco*: abbondante, media, rada, mancante. — *arti*: abbondante, media, rada, mancante.	Ipertricosi regionale
CARATTERI COLORIMETRICI	
1. *Occhi*: n. ___ scala di Martin-Schultz.	Cerchio esterno dell'iride più chiaro
2. *Capelli*: n. ___ scala di Fischer-Saller; brizzolati, canuti.	
3. *Baffi*: n. ___ scala di Fischer-Saller; brizzolati, canuti.	
4. *Barba*: n. ___ scala di Fischer-Saller; brizzolata, canuta.	
5. *Pelle*: *fronte*: n. ___ scala di v. Luschan; *braccio*: n. ___ » » »	
CARATTERI FISIOLOGICI	
1. *Forza muscolare mano destra*	
2. *Gruppo sanguigno* O, A, B, AB,	
3. *Metabolismo basale*	
4. *Altre reazioni* (indicare quali e il risultato)	
ALLEGATI	
1. *Fotografia* n.	
2. *Modulo dentario* n.	
3. *Contorno della mano destra* n.	
4. *Contorno del piede destro* n.	
5. *Impronta della mano destra* n.	
6. *Impronta del piede destro* n.	
7. *Esame del capello* n.	

(6183349) Roma, 1933-XI - Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato - C. C.

Figure 3: General overview of CISP anthropological questionnaire (Archivio Gini, ACS, Rome)

The last data sheet was a detailed medical questionnaire (*scheda medica*) that researchers were expected to fill out for each individual they encountered in the field. For a number of scientific and deontological reasons, only a qualified physician could fill it. In some cases, Italian scientists hired local practitioners or medical researchers with direct knowledge of the population under study. Amongst the information that these physicians were expected to provide was data about "social diseases" (such as syphilis, tuberculosis, alcoholism etc.) from which the individual might have suffered. As one can imagine, information on congenital traits was to be recorded equally carefully. Blood typing was performed on a systematic basis, and the blood group of the individual was mentioned on their *scheda antropologica*.



COMITATO ITALIANO PER LO STUDIO DEI PROBLEMI DELLA POPOLAZIONE

ROMA - Via delle Terme di Diocleziano, 10

SCHEDA MEDICA N. _____

Vedi scheda antropometriça N. _____ Vedi scheda demografica N. _____

Generalità (nome, cognome e paternità) _____

maternità _____ Sesso _____ nat__ il _____ (giorno, mese, anno)

anni (compiuti) ____ da parto semplice, gemino, trigemino _____

Coniugato con _____

VACCINAZIONI E RIVACCINAZIONI

GENERE	DATA 1ª vaccinazione	ESITO	DATA 1ª rivaccinazione	DATA 2ª rivaccinazione	*OSSERVAZIONI*
Antivaiolosa					
Anticolerica					
Antitifica.....					

Anamnesi familiare: _____

Anamnesi individuale — Remota: _____

Anamnesi individuale — Prossima: _____

Malattie sociali – Lues: in atto ____ pregressa ____ contratta a _____ il _____

Tubercolosi: » ____ » ____

Alcoolismo: » ____ » ____

Malaria: » ____ » ____ contratta a _____ il _____

Tracoma: » ____ » ____ contratto a _____ il _____

Altre eventuali: _____

Esame obbiettivo: Indicare gli eventuali referti positivi, indicando *N.N.* nel caso che non si riscontrino malattie in atto o reliquiati di malattie pregresse, o caratteri dismorfici.

Aspetto generale: *a)* Stato di nutrizione generale _____ *b)* Stato di sanguificazione _____

c) Costituzione scheletrica _____ *d)* Sviluppo muscolare _____ *e)* Tono muscolare _____

Organi [e sistemi: Sistema cardio-vascolare _____

» linfatico _____

» respiratorio _____

» digerente _____

» sessuale _____

» nervoso _____

» cutaneo _____

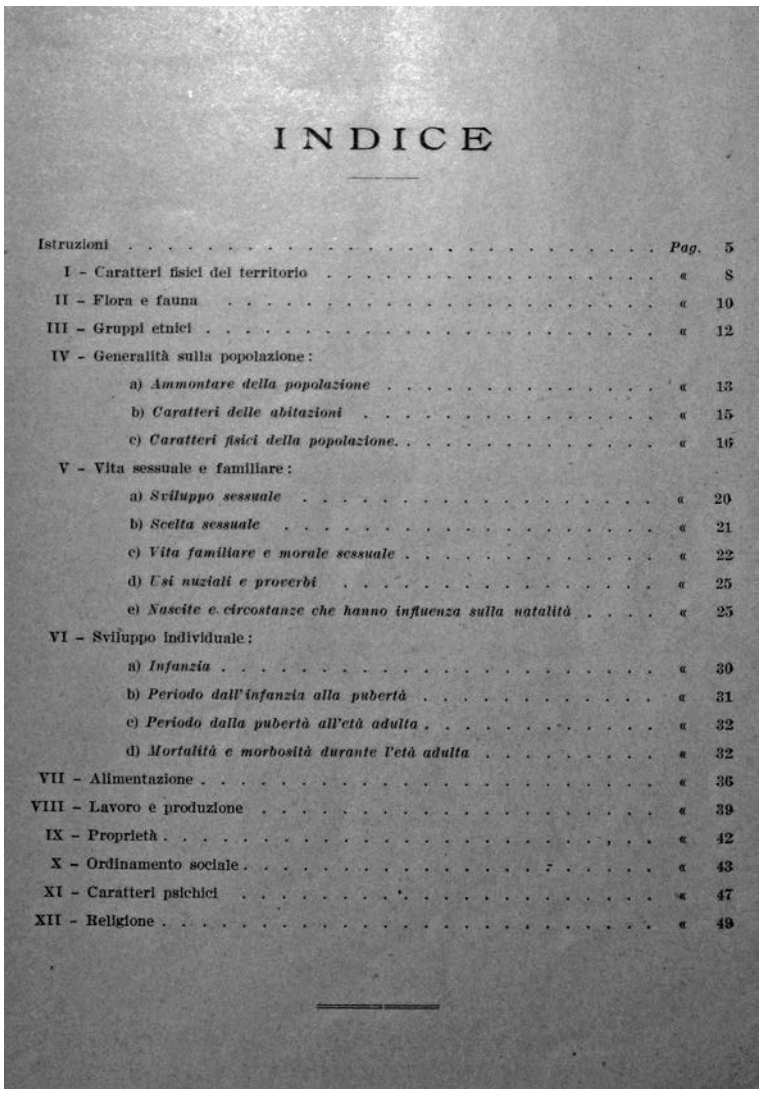
» pilifero _____

Arti superiori _____ Arti inferiori _____

Figure 4: General overview of CISP medical questionnaire (Archivio Gini, ACS, Rome)

One of the main issues, when it came to planning an expedition was therefore to make sure that there would be enough qualified anthropologists and physicians in the field to fill out all the questionnaires. Here again, in many cases, go-betweens proved instrumental in hiring extra staff.

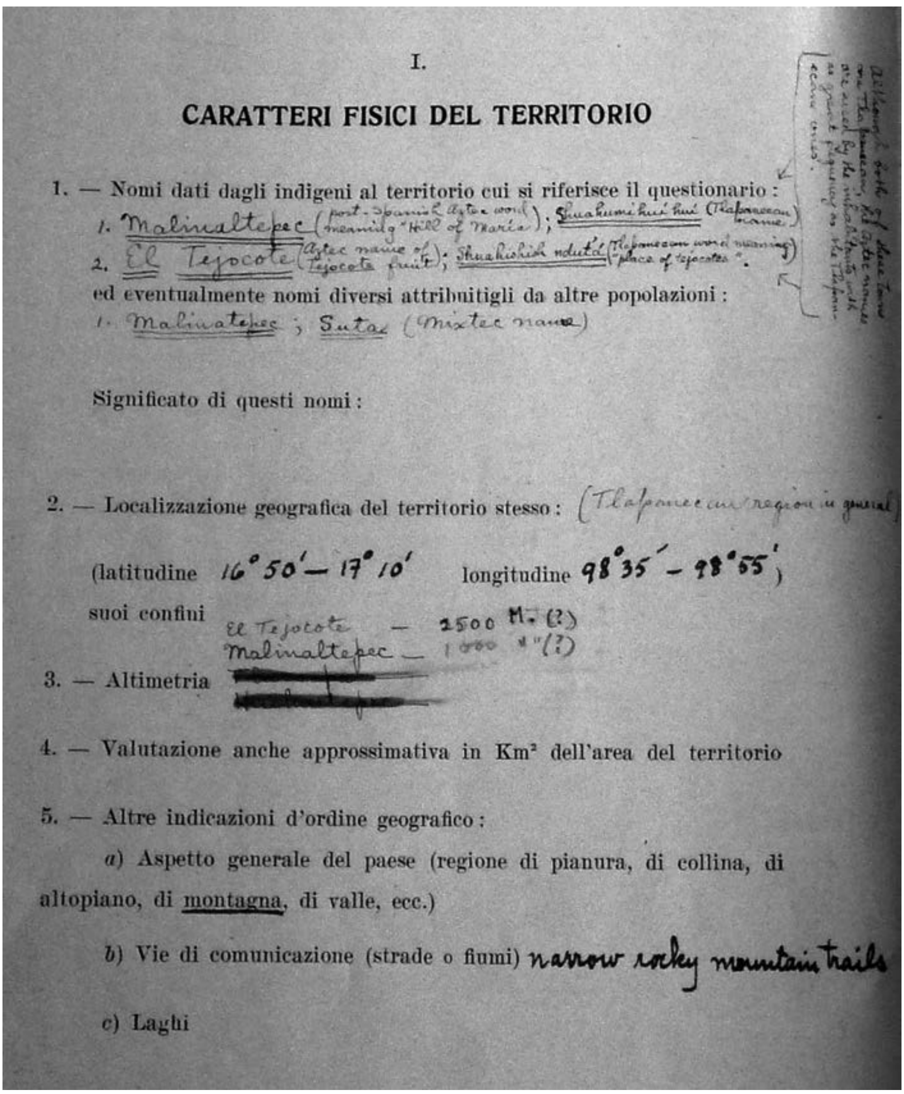
The three complementary questionnaires combined were meant to provide a comprehensive, quantitative appraisal of the population under study: a totalizing view of the human community that would also allow for comparisons between the different human groups investigated over the years. However, before drawing comparisons between "isolate" and/or "interbreeding" populations, one had to take into account the characteristics of the environment in which they lived. Environment (*ambiente* in Italian) was, here as always, an umbrella term that encapsulated a series of different dimensions, from the geographical and geological attributes of the habitat (altitude, rain fall etc.), to more social, political and



INDICE

Figure 5: Table of Contents of CISP qualitative questionnaire (Archivio Gini, ACS, Rome)

economic dimensions (means of subsistence, social organization, stability etc.). Owing to the lack of available statistics on all these points, as well as to the very nature of some of the information needed, the Italian population scientists put aside their preference for quantitative data and increasingly started gathering qualitative information. In fact, in addition to filling the three forms already mentioned, each investigation team also had to fill a qualitative report, which was also entitled *Questionario*. The document was divided into a series of subsections that dealt with "the flora and fauna" of the location; the characteristics of the housing; the predominant diet; the "work and production;" the "ownership of landed property;" "social organization;" the "psychological characteristics" of the population; and finally its "religion" (Busta D.8, 1933-1941). This is the reason why, in addition to statisticians-demographers, anthropologists, and physicians, CISP research teams also included an ethnographer or a sociologist, who could be Italian or "local," depending on the circumstances.



I.

CARATTERI FISICI DEL TERRITORIO

1. — Nomi dati dagli indigeni al territorio cui si riferisce il questionario:
1. Malinaltepec (post-Spanish Aztec word meaning "Hill of Maria"); Shuahumi hui hui (Tlapanecan name)
2. El Tejocote (Aztec name of Tejocote fruit); Shuahishih ndutá (Tlapanecan word meaning "place of tejocotes").
ed eventualmente nomi diversi attribuitigli da altre popolazioni:
1. Malinatepec; Sutac (Mixtec name)

Significato di questi nomi:

2. — Localizzazione geografica del territorio stesso: (Tlapanecan region in general)

(latitudine 16°50' — 17°10' longitudine 98°35' – 98°55')

suoi confini

El Tejocote — 2500 M. (?)
Malinaltepec — 1000 " (?)

3. — Altimetria [redacted]

4. — Valutazione anche approssimativa in Km² dell'area del territorio

5. — Altre indicazioni d'ordine geografico:

a) Aspetto generale del paese (regione di pianura, di collina, di altopiano, di montagna, di valle, ecc.)

b) Vie di comunicazione (strade o fiumi) narrow rocky mountain trails

c) Laghi

Figure 6: Detail of CISP qualitative questionnaire (Archivio Gini, ACS, Rome)

All these different kinds of data – quantitative and qualitative, demographical, anthropological, medical and environmental – were closely entwined in the narratives of the many oral presentations Gini made, both in Europe, the United States and Latin America in the mid-1930s, and in the different publications that started appearing at the same time. In turn, his efforts provided growing visibility to Italian population science, while enhancing his own position among the many fellow eugenicists who, from Romania to Southern America and many other countries, increasingly opposed IFEO's approach to "human betterment."

Final considerations: a manifold, ambivalent legacy

In the short term, Corrado Gini's scientific strategy proved highly successful. Arguably the more direct effect of his restless activism, at least in chronological terms, was his election as founding president of the International Federation of Latin Eugenic Societies in 1935. As already mentioned, the creation of such an organization, had been in discussion among eugenicists from Latin America and some "Latin" European countries since the early 1930s, as a means to counter an "Anglo-Saxon Establishment" who believed in the superiority of the Nordic race (to whom they allegedly belonged) over the "Latin" one (Kühl, 2013, p.47). Meanwhile, the scientific and political program set out by CISP and the frenetic pace of their activities had brought a great deal of attention to Gini, all over Latin America. Indeed, it was the Mexican delegation at the founding congress of the "Latin Federation" (made up of anthropologists and eugenicists who had seen Gini at work in their own country in 1933) who put forward his name for the presidency of the new organization. One interesting paradox of the statistician's long and multi-faceted career lay in the fact that he reached the apex of his international recognition at a time when he was beginning to be gradually marginalized in his home country (on "Gini's gradual exclusion from the elaboration of a Fascist population policy" from 1935 onwards, see Cassata, 2006b, p.133).

Furthermore, the Italian statistician did not enjoy his enhanced international visibility for very long, as the outbreak of the Second World War proved fatal to the Federation, and to the whole Latin Eugenic movement more broadly. The conflict itself, and later the fall of the fascist regime in Italy, dealt a terrible blow to CISP's enormous, almost hubristic ambition. Although Gini survived the "legal purge" as only a minor inconvenience, the committee never regained its past prominence. This is not to say that the research programme was abandoned altogether. On the contrary: unable to launch any more expeditions, Gini, his long-time collaborators, and a few newcomers concentrated on analyzing the great quantity of data that had been gathered during the ten investigations. A long series of articles, books, and other kinds of publications based on that very material were still appearing in the 1970s.

Indeed, the last point I would like to address concerns CISP's manifold, and somehow ambivalent legacy. The fact that the Committee has been almost completely ignored by historians of human heredity, population science or anthropology, does not mean that the ten expeditions undertaken between 1933 and 1940 did not have any impact on the populations studied, or on the scientific communities in the countries they visited. Admittedly, the former dimension can be difficult to document accurately, although the investigation into the "Karaite Jews" provided an interesting (if thorny) case in point.

The latter, on the contrary, proves easier to explore. The most fascinating case, in this respect, is probably the Mexican one: far from being repressed, or just forgotten, the memory of the Italian expedition was still vivid among Mexican anthropologists well after Second World War. Nonetheless, the dozens of publications written by Gini and his collaborators over the years failed to attract the attention of historians and sociologists of science, despite the reception they received amongst population scientists. This is all the more surprising since CISP's research activities constitute a crucial episode in the history of the two main, complementary kinds of investigation in biological-physical anthropology, and population science: namely, "human isolate," and "(racial) admixture" studies. Gini's scientific enterprises, despite all their scientific shortcomings and racist presuppositions, merit further study.

NOTES

[1] Bizarrely, this point has not attracted much attention from the growing number of scholars who, in recent years, have written on the history of Latin eugenics.

[2] The IFEO was founded in 1925 in order to further the mission of the Permanent International Eugenics Committee, which had been established by a resolution of the 1st International Eugenics Congress in 1912; both organizations had their headquarters in London (Bashford, 2010, p.156).

[3] For a more detailed biographical account, see Federici (2001).

[4] Gini's first foray into this matter dated back to his 1908 presentation entitled: "Il diverso accrescimento delle classi sociali e la concentrazione della ricchezza" (published in Gini, 1909). He then explored the issue further in a long essay (Gini, 1912a). However, it is only in his paper on "concentration indexes" that he introduced what he called the "R ratio of concentration" (Gini, 1914), which became known as the Gini coefficient, and is still used internationally to measure economic and social inequalities (Giorgi, 1992).

[5] The account of Gini's wartime activities and his contribution to post-war commissions can be found in Busta D.4 (1915-1919). Reflecting on the British case, Agar (2003) has highlighted the role played by statisticians in setting up and running "the Government machine," whereas Prevost (2009) has underlined the growing involvement of Italian statisticians in public affairs during the first decades of the twentieth century.

[6] At that time Corrado Gini was one of the three main *capiscuola*, together with Giorgio Mortara (1885-1967) and Livio Livi (1891-1967) (Treves, 2001; Prevost, 2009).

[7] This is one of the key elements that were raised against Corrado Gini during his *processo di epurazione* (legal purging) that started in the fall of 1944. The statistician was sentenced to a one-year suspension from his academic position in January 1945 (he had been provisionally suspended in November 1944). For different reasons, both the defendant and the prosecutor appealed against this decision; however, the case was dismissed on technical grounds on 17 December 1945, and Gini resumed his academic and public lives (Cassata, 2004).

[8] Sanger and Gini met at the Geneva Conference, but did not really get on. In her memoirs, she called him, "highly egotistical … the perfect mirror of Mussolini's sentiments … a most tiresome speaker and a general nuisance" (Sanger, 1938, p.385). On the dynamics of the conference, and the inception of UISIPP, see Connelly (2008, p.68-71). The proceedings of the conference appeared in Sanger (1927).

[9] Population politics was integral to Italian fascism, all the more after the so-called "pro-natalist turn" of 1927 (the very year of the Geneva Conference), that was set out in Mussolini's famous "Ascension Day speech" (Ipsen, 1996, p.65-67; Cassata, 2006b, p.20).

[10] The relationship between the Italian statistician and IUSIPP leadership, already strained since the time of the Geneva conference, further deteriorated when the Union retracted their decision to convene its first major international conference in Rome, in 1931, and relocated it to London. Defiantly, Gini decided to hold the Rome conference all the same. This prompted his demotion from the vice-presidency of the Union, which in turn led CISP to leave the international organization right away. IUSIPP then played on the well-known rivalry between Gini and fellow statistician Livio Livi by appointing the latter to a vice-presidency in 1935 and making his Comitato di consulenza per gli studi sulla popolazione the official Italian constituent member of the Union in 1937 (Sottofascicolo 3, 1935-1937).

[11] In a note dated 19 March 1928 Mussolini instructed the head of the Opera Nazionale Balilla (ONB, the Fascist youth organization established in 1926) to reduce his financial pledge to CISP fivefold (!), and reconsider the extent of their support at the same time: down from 50,000 Lire per year, for a five-year period, to L. 10,000 over three years (Mussolini, 19 Mar. 1928).

[12] Although the fragmentary accounting documentation retained in Gini's personal papers does not allow for an accurate calculation of the Committee's revenue, a series of letters from various institutions (dated between 1928 and 1932) leaves no doubt about the considerable amount of wealth accumulated over the years. For example: ISTAT contributed L. 100,000 per year, for five years; the Consiglio Provinciale per l'Economia di Milano L. 30,000 per year for five years; some tiny local banks pledged as much as L. 10,000 for three years (Cassa di Risparmio di Verona and Cassa di Risparmio delle Provincia Lombarde); in the end, even the City of Bologna insisted on sending "five yearly payments of five thousand lire each" (Telegramma…, 27 Aug. 1928).

[13] In a note dated 11 April 1932, the head of the Consiglio Provinciale dell'Economia di Genova (which had contributed no less than L. 25,000 per year over the previous five years) complained that "according to information obtained by our representative liaising with the said Committee [CISP]," "the Committee could not even manage to spend a third of their annual revenue, despite their tendency to hand out money with largesse" (Consiglio…, 11 Apr. 1932).

[14] For an English presentation of CISP's scientific aims, see Gini's Hanna Lecture, given at the Ohio State University in 1933, and published in Gini (1934).

[15] "The first point of our programme is then that of bringing together the efforts of demographers, sociologists, ethnologists, general biologists, hygienists, eugenicists, medical men, historians, geographers and theoretical statisticians in order to make as thorough an investigation as possible into the life of populations" (Gini, 1934, p.2).

[16] "[T]he life of a population is precarious when its numbers are very reduced. Its condition may be compared to that of a gambler playing high stakes with scanty reserves. However clever he may be, the time comes when in the course of the ups and downs of good and ill fortune, a stroke of bad luck eliminates him from the game" (Gini, 1934, p.12-13).

[17] In 1934, the Italian Committee launched a journal entirely dedicated to the study of human populations: *Genus*. From the very beginning, they published articles in four languages on a wide range of topics. The periodical promptly gained international recognition; it still exists and remains influential to this day.

[18] After a few years studying allegedly "primitive" populations, Gini built on his experience to outline a detailed definition of "primitivity" (Gini, 1937; commented in Cassata, 2006b, p.136-137).

[19] The expedition was chiefly organized by Enrico [Haskel] Sonnabend, a statistician of Jewish-Russian descent who had been the secretary of CISP from 1928 to 1931, before emigrating to Southern Rhodesia, and then to South Africa. At the time of the expedition, he was teaching anthropology at the University of Witwatersrand (Gini, 1956).

[20] A large amount of correspondence between CISP and their different go-betweens can be found in Buste D.2, D.4, D.9 (1932-1956).

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