

## **Profiles from Italy: Category 6**

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### **Enzo**

Enzo was born in 1958 in a very large family living in a suburban quarter of Naples. He's the second of seven sons; four of them are male and three female. His father has been a workman in a very important factory in a quarter of Neapolitan suburbs with strong labour traditions. His mother, indeed, has always been a housewife.

Since his family supports itself with only one income, and for this reason hasn't great means, once ended the second class at high school, in 1970, Enzo leaves school. At the same time, being good at playing football, and supported by his father, he starts cultivating seriously the football activity. So he succeeds in playing in a juvenile team, at semiprofessional level, and receives also a small salary and the repayment of expenses. But four years later, when two opportunities arise to go and play in a higher division, his father hasn't the economic force to redeem his football card and sell it to more important teams. In the same year, 1974, Enzo plays for the last time with his team and then he, maybe due to the disappointment, gives up playing football. So he becomes unemployed; in the same year he gets engaged to a girl who works in her father's firm, producing fireworks. Two years later, being still unemployed, Enzo leaves to serve in the Navy.

On his return - in 1979, at 21 - Enzo starts working into a factory in the place of his father who has retired. In fact, the firm has offered his father the opportunity to engage one of his sons. However they had settled that Enzo should support his father and his mother for some years. Being completely integrated into the firm and satisfied with his job, he decides to get marry in 1980.

In the meantime, Enzo has the opportunity, into the factory, to finish the course of regular studies, attending a course of 150 hours, and to improve his working position - indeed he becomes a laboratory engineer.

In 1983 Enzo becomes father for the first time; in the same year his wife is engaged in a nursing home. Three years later, in 1986, they have their second child, a girl.

This period of stability breaks in 1989, when Enzo has a car accident and is forced to stay in a hospital. His wife, for not being alone, move to her mother-in-law's house. But when the stay in the hospital ends, Enzo and his wife don't return home but remain at his parents' house.

Meanwhile, in 1991, the factory where Enzo works goes through a difficult period that culminates in 1993 putting on temporary lay-off (CIG) the workers, at first

on ordinary Cig and, after some time, on extraordinary Cig. In the same period Enzo's wife finds out to be expecting twins and Enzo, in order to supplement his income, starts working as pony-express. In 1995 the period of temporary lay-off ends and only in 1997 Enzo enters in the mobilità's lists, and thanks to them he's called, soon after, for the 'socially useful employment' at the 'Procura della Repubblica' as waiter. The project will last a year; anyway Enzo lives badly his involvement in a state working context.

## **Giovanni**

Giovanni comes from a country family living in a town of Neapolitan rural hinterland. He's the first of three children. Both his parents till the land, even though his mother, after the marriage, stops working and devotes herself to the family.

Giovanni was born in 1940; his first years coincide with the war time, moreover he's son of farmers and lives in an agricultural town. For this reason it's quite usual that he, soon after having obtained the high school certificate, starts working and helps his father in the country. However, just 14, he leaves the job in agriculture and begins working in building, a sector which will be pushing in 50's as a result of the increasing urbanisation of the area.

After having worked (presumably in black) for few years in this sector, Giovanni get married and over ten years he has got four daughters.

Confirming his attitude to follow the changes in the labour system, and to grasp the new opportunities, Giovanni in the early 70's starts working into a factory. But an injury to his hand intervenes to break this progressive process of integration into the modernised society. Actually, Giovanni isn't able to work with the complex machinery to which he's assigned, and he breaks it.

Immediately his employers dismiss him and Giovanni reacts to the disappointment taking a legal action against the firm for unpaid remuneration. Therefore he starts working again in building, even with a certain success; in fact, he takes part in building a great industry plant and works for quite important firms.

Four year later Giovanni is called through the employment agency for constructing another large industry factory. Once ended the construction of the plant, the workers fight to be absorbed by the company; however they don't succeed and are put on Cassa Integrazione Guadagni (CIG) (temporary lay-off)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>The difference between the Cassa Integrazione Guadagni (C.I.G.) or temporary lay off, and 'mobilità' is as follows: in the case of CIG, the contract between the firm and the worker is not broken, whereas with 'mobilità' the worker's contract with the firm is ended and s/he is dependent on the state. In the latter case the worker is liable to be placed in another firm or in some so-called 'socially useful employment'. 'Mobilità' (brought in by the law 223 in 1991) may be 'short' (3 years) or 'long' (7 years), according to whether s/he has reached the age of 50 or not. Workers on 'mobilità' face decreasing earnings (from about 80% of their previous remuneration), and

Giovanni reacts continuing with his day work in the building sector and he supplements in this way the income coming from Cig. Although his new condition of 'person in temporary lay-off/day worker', and then the insecurity of his income, Giovanni becomes father for the fifth time, two years after he has gone on Cig.

From this moment, Giovanni, who abandons at this point the dream to realise his project of labour mobility and stabilisation, continues acting through this strategy of income integration. So he faces his putting on 'mobilità', makes up for the end of 'mobilità' with the black job, doesn't change his habits even when they call him for 'Lavori Socialmente Utili (LSU) (Socially Useful Employment)<sup>2</sup>. Probably Giovanni has realised that his difficulties have derived from his poor qualification and for this reason, since he doesn't want to repeat his errors, makes his daughter study (even though they are women) and his youngest son as well. His aspirations to mobility and modernisation have been 'projected' on the second generation.

## **Marisa**

Marisa is 50; she was born in Naples in a typically bourgeoisie quarter. Although her modest origins (her father is a civil servant and we don't know his education; her mother is a housewife and has studied only up to the primary school; Marisa has four youngest brothers and sisters) after the compulsory school she continues studying until getting the diploma as accountant.

We know little about Marisa's infancy and adolescence, as well as about the years passed from the diploma (1967) to the initiatives taken to find a job. These will be successful when, in 1970, Marisa is engaged by a multinational producing photographic materials.

Neither her marriage, in 1971, following her entry into the company, nor the birth of her children, happened at a distance of five years from each other, change the action strategy of her life. Marisa continues doing what she considers necessary to realise professionally herself and, most of all, to gain advancement.

For this reason when in the company (where she has been working for nearly 20 years and where she has invested a lot, taking away time and energies from her family) it is ventilated the hypothesis of dismissing some employees (in 1990), Marisa doesn't accept to negotiate the end of her job relation and together with other employees sue

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make putative insurance contributions, (the years on 'mobilità' are only counted towards the pension). At the end of the period of 'mobilità' the worker no longer receive any form of benefit. Anyone who is not placed gets a pension only if s/he has qualified for 35 years of contributions, otherwise s/he becomes unemployed.

<sup>2</sup>The Lavori Socialmente Utili (LSU) (Socially Useful Employment) represent a form of social cushion which consists in paying a minimum salary to workers on mobilità, in exchange for their work in programs of public utility. They are time contracts; when they expire, the worker becomes unemployed and he no longer receives any form of benefit.

the firm. But she will be forced to surrender two years later, since the few colleagues who were with her settle to give up and accept the terms of the company.

The loss of her job is surely, for Marisa, a dramatic event, not so much for the economic deprivation involved but rather for the loss of meaning that her life suffers.

In fact, with the entry in the mobility's lists, in 1992, Marisa (who was 44 at the time) doesn't seem to commit herself for finding another job.

The social mobility she has already experienced towards her family of origin and that has been perfected by her oldest son - who has graduated and has remained to work in the university context - doesn't allow her to find or accept unskilled jobs, really unqualified or at least in her perception. So she accepts very willingly the 'Socially Useful Employment' (LSU) (Lavori Socialmente Utili) but only because they are at high technological contents, that is preparing a CD ROM for the Municipality of Naples.

Alternatively to working, at moment, Marisa applies herself to cultural activities such as the film debates or the visits to Museums. She must consider those activities as more consistent to the social position acquired, which she has reached investing so much of her life in work.

## **Pasquale**

Pasquale is 58 years old and was born in a country family in a rural town of Neapolitan hinterland. We know very little of his infancy and adolescence, if not he was born in the World War II time and has lost his mother at a tender age. His father, left a widower early, when Pasquale is only 7, marries again and has also other children with his second wife. Pasquale leaves school just in this period.

Thus, he starts working since he was a child, at first with his father in the country, soon after in building (a black job) and afterwards as truck driver (always in black).

In 1960, at 21, he gets married and starts working in a firm which recycles industry waste, always in black and as truck driver.

In the first three or four years of his marriage, Pasquale has got three or even four children. Perhaps just the increase of his family burden represents one of the reason for which he will search for, or in any case will accept, a new job, as truck driver again, in a firm that is building the plant for an important motor industry. In 1969, once ended the construction of the plant, Pasquale, on the ground of definite trade-union agreements, is engaged regularly as workman in the company itself. Just in these years he joins the trade union, playing an active role inside it.

Some time after his engagement, he has the opportunity to become a foreman, maybe thanks to his involvement in the trade union.

However, soon after Pasquale has obtained the advancement, in 1974 he's the protagonist of a serious event in the factory, which he defines as 'an argument' with a colleague, and he settles to resign. Then he starts working in another great company in the chemical sector, where he's a truck driver again.

In the meantime, he has got other three children. In 1977, at 38 and with seven sons dependent, he is put on Cassa Integrazione Guadagni (CIG).

Thanks to his previous activity in the trade union, he's delegated to keep the contacts with the firm and the provident institution for drawing the sums to hand out to the workers put on CIG by the company. Therefore he has a role of great responsibility.

During his 16 years in CIG, Pasquale works also in several road yards, buys a land, which from time to time he cultivates by himself, and begins to settle down his sons.

All that suddenly stops in 1993, when he goes on 'mobilità'. Pasquale's life, who is by now 54, changes radically: he loses all at once his role of union representative.

This circumstance must have weighed on Pasquale who falls ill just in these years, or at least his viral hepatitis worsens so much to lead him to start the papers for the disability pension. He obtains it in 1996, only a year before ceasing his stay on 'mobilità'.

The cycle of Pasquale's working life seems to be ended at this point.