

studies and methodology, was a precise, constant point of reference. Significant innovations were introduced, requiring research projects to be multi-disciplinary, involve teamwork and make use of new methodologies. In its first decade the Foundation's objectives were twofold. In fact its activities were based on the awareness that it was necessary to overcome the shortcomings of the country's system of higher education. Its multifaceted structure made it possible to envisage its evolving into an independent academic center, working with universities but distinct from them. An alternative hypothesis, advocated by Luigi Firpo, placed greater emphasis on shaping the new generations that would follow university careers, and reducing the Foundation's role as a separate research center. This latter approach ultimately prevailed, to some extent as a result of the tensions and social conflict that led to the series of mass strikes that swept Italy in the autumn and winter of 1969-70. In 1984, with the introduction of PhD programs in Italian universities, the Foundation reexamined its grant system to better enable it to support young people in the period between graduation from university and the start of their doctoral studies and the period between the end of their postgraduate studies and the beginning of their university teaching careers. In the years that followed, the Foundation continued to make fellowships available to enable young people to pursue doctoral studies, following a policy of supporting especially, but not exclusively, those who were continuing their studies abroad and creating fellowships for people under the age of thirty. The concept of an autonomous center for independent research was thus deemphasized in favor of support for the evolving university system.