

ABSTRACT

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Towards a New Model of Relationships among Business Associations: The Italian Hoteliers in the International Context (1900s-1930s)

Despite the growing interest in the history of business associations, little attention has been paid to the transnational dimensions of their actions, such as federations collecting business associations from different countries. Such an analysis may be fruitful to explore how business associations operating at a national scale try to interact with other foreign-based employers' organisations having similar goals. Our paper aims at contributing to this field by examining the relationships at the international level of the Italian Hoteliers Associations, from the beginning of the 20th century to the eve of the Second World War.

In 1908 the *Fédération Universelle des Sociétés d'Hôteliers et Sociétés affiliées* was founded; however, its activity stopped in 1914 because of the war. Despite its short existence, the *Fédération Universelle* laid the foundations to the birth, in 1921, of the *Alliance Internationale de l'Hôtellerie*, which was able to gather a larger number of business associations also from non-European countries.

A focal point is that both the *Fédération Universelle* and the *Alliance Internationale* should be considered not so much a peak organisation representing the hotel sector at the international level, but a common ground, where national business associations could interact on a peer-to-peer basis in order to share information and experiences, to study general issues concerning the hotel industry and international tourist flows.