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Cole, Jeffrey Eugene, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1993

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A

RACE AND IMMIGRATION IN SICILY

by

JEFFREY EUGENE COLE

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
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1993

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Abstract

RACE AND IMMIGRATION IN SICILY

by

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Advisor: Professor Jane Schneider

Recent violence and political mobilization against immigrants, refugees, and settled minorities have underlined the importance of race in Western Europe. This study examines the absence of significant anti-immigrant expression in the Southern Italian region of Sicily, despite a large African and Asian immigrant population and high unemployment, and given the resurgence of racism and nationalism in Europe. It is based on a year of anthropological research in the city of Palermo.

The dissertation addresses two questions: class variation in Sicilian evaluations of immigrants, and the ways race and immigration find political expression in Sicily as opposed to Northern Italy. Review of immigration to Italy, the bearing of race on this phenomenon, and the political economy of Palermo provide the background for the study. Starting from the question of working-class racism, working-class and bourgeois views of immigrants are compared in the context of class experience, Italian popular culture, and Sicilian ideas about the obligation of former emigrants to current immigrants. Working Palermitans worry about competing for resources with

immigrants, whom they call "Turks" (although none come from Turkey), but rarely express racism. Their views are typically ambivalent, recognizing immigrants as fellow poor while denigrating them as undeserving of opportunity in Italy. The bourgeoisie, by contrast, express an explicit anti-racism towards "immigrants of color." These views draw on traditions of solidarity in Italian political culture as well as on the ideas of the local intelligentsia about Sicilian tolerance. Yet bourgeois power over foreign workers and notions about the relative aptitude of different immigrant groups cloud these ideals of anti-racism.

The contrast of an apolitical acceptance of immigrants in the poor region of Sicily with a highly politicized response to them in the rich North of Italy illustrates the interplay of regional culture and politics in racial politics. Northern "leagues" draw on widespread anger toward the Italian state and popular anti-Southernism to demonize immigrants and Southerners alike. The absence of racist politics in Sicily, by contrast, stems from tolerance born of the emigrant experience and from a clientelistic system that impedes political expression on race as well as on other issues.

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I benefitted from the assistance of many individuals

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Chapter I

Introduction

1. Carnival in Florence

In late January of 1990, during the celebration of Carnival in Florence, about forty youths, masked and armed and calling themselves "avengers," beat several North Africans and a Slav. Chanting "get the Moroccan" and "dirty dealer, shitty Tunisian," they chased immigrants, destroyed property, and clashed with police. This brutal expedition to "clean up the city" was not an isolated incident. A week earlier, merchants in the historic center of Florence had sponsored a march to gain public support for their objections to the presence of unlicensed immigrant street vendors. Under the euphemistic banner "citizens in defense" they led some 4000 people in protest "against violence, degradation, and drug dealing" in the city. Posters warned ominously of **giustizieri della notte** ("avengers of the night").¹ The neo-Fascist party, the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), joined the march and led chants of **rimandiamoli a casa** ("let's send them home) and **facciamo la giustizia da soli** ("let's take justice into our own hands").² It also put up posters depicting hands ripping apart a map of the city. Although the party claimed the hands represented corruption, to observers they

1. The primary meaning of **giustizieri** is executioner.

2. The closely related phrase, **fare giustizia**, means to put to death.

appeared significantly dark-skinned.

These events bound tightly the themes of immigration and race, and consumed the political energies of the city. Newspapers such as **La Repubblica**, major political parties and the union **Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro** (CGIL) condemned the attack as expressions of **razzismo** ("racism"). While none of the participants explicitly defined **razzismo**, they, like the Italian press and intellectuals generally, use the term to mean hostility, violence, and intolerance directed against culturally and physically different populations. The idea of race is moreover conceptually linked to what is often called the "immigration of color" (**immigrazione di colore**), that is, the recent immigration to Italy of Africans, Asians, Middle Easterners, and Eastern Europeans. Here as elsewhere in Europe, race is as much a contested category of political debate as one of sociological analysis. Since World War II, Italians have learned to condemn as inhumane any form of racial discrimination or violence. Many have assumed that Italians were in fact "immune to racism." As Dacia Maraini recalls:

...I always remember having heard, from my childhood on, that Italians 'by nature are immune to racism.' 'Italy was Fascist,' it was said, 'out of ignorance, out of conformism, out of fear, but it was never blinded by racist hate.' How many Italians in Africa,' someone added, 'paired off with black girls, and even had children. [**L'Unità** 8 March 1990]

Sounding a leitmotif in Italian debate on immigration, she

goes on to criticize Italians who, as a "people of emigrants," have known the indifference, hostility, and hard work of migration, and who therefore should make more efforts to understand and accept immigrants.

In Florence, the political confrontation following the Carnival attack hinged in large part on the charged question of "racism." The investigating magistrate called the attack premeditated and "racist," and suggested the merchants' march condoned the violence. The police forces, on the other hand, denied any racism, calling the attack "'normal' hooliganism," and began clearing the city of immigrant vendors with the approval of the Socialist (PSI) mayor, Giorgio Morales. The mayor, when asked by journalists if "Florence had become racist," replied "No, Florence is not racist. But there is a small fringe of intolerant people" (*La Repubblica* 1 March 1990). Likewise, the local newspaper, *La Nazione*, carefully excluded "racism" from the title of its coverage of the attack ("Night of Violence and Madness"), and gave equal space to an article about immigrants entitled, "Drugs, Flames, and Vendettas Among Immigrants" (*La Nazione* 28 February 1990). In response to the clearing of immigrants, the former Communist party³ withdrew its support from the City

3. In 1990, the Italian Communist Party (PCI), rocked by events in Eastern Europe, changed its name to the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS). In the course of this change a splinter group broke off, calling itself the *Rifondazione Comunista* (RC). In this dissertation I refer to the former PCI as the PDS.

Council, forcing the mayor's resignation. Students and mostly Senegalese vendors initiated a hunger strike in protest of what they viewed as a "racist" clearing of immigrants from the city center. These events catapulted Florence into the center of the debate then raging in Parliament as it passed immigration legislation under Law #39, which enabled foreigners present in Italy before the end of 1989 to register for residence and work permits.⁴ Parties hostile to the legislation, such as the Lega Lombarda ("Lombard League"),⁵ the MSI, and the Republicans (PRI), argued that the proposed law was lenient and would promote future crises. The PSI, which had sponsored the bill, and the PDS, which had supported it, countered that only such a law could guarantee the humane treatment of foreigners in Italy. The intense media focus on Florence came to a close when the mayor agreed to designated space in public markets for immigrant vendors.

These events transformed the politics of immigration in Italy in two important ways. First, the "Moroccan Hunt" of the Carnival represented an unprecedented fusion of violence and racial politics. The violence, committed within the public, ritual setting of Carnival, transformed into political action what had been a symbolic repertoire of racial imagery in Italian popular culture (Gallini 1992). Much subsequent violence against immigrants in

4. Law #39 is described in detail in Chapter II, section 7.

5. Hereafter referred to by its current name, the Lega Nord.

Florence and throughout the North of Italy also bore a political stamp. So-called "skins" and neo-Nazis in particular drew on Fascist precedents for excluding and terrorizing the Other, and their acts were meant as exemplary and public corrections of a society which they saw as fundamentally flawed.

Second, by siding with the merchants and against the immigrants, the parties opposed to the new immigration law legitimated the merchants' protest, which subsequently served as a model for similar protests elsewhere (Manconi 1990). Like much anti-immigrant politics elsewhere in Western Europe this position confronts the discourse of antiracism in a subtle way: it repudiates the violence and overt racism of groups like the Florentine "avengers," while at the same phrasing opposition to foreigners in terms of seemingly non-racist themes such as the need for law and order and the defense of local economic interests.

The Lega Nord and the MSI are currently the most active anti-immigrant parties in Italy. In 1990, they called for a referendum on the immigration law in the hopes of making it more stringent if not abolishing it, and they often mobilize local opposition to government sponsored programs for immigrants. Of the two, the Lega is by far the most influential, owing to the continuing electoral success that has changed it from an upstart regionalist party to a major player in Italian politics in the last decade. In the 1991 municipal elections in Brescia, the

second largest city in the region of Lombardy, the Lega outpaced the Christian Democrats (DC) to become the city's largest party (Codevilla 1992: 158); and in national elections held in April of 1992 it garnered 8% to 10% of the vote (*New York Times* 7 April 1992). The on-going [1992-3] "clean hands" scandal, which has implicated numerous figures in politics and industry in bribery and kickback schemes, will only increase the Lega's appeal. The Lega's main themes are the call for greater regional autonomy and the attack on the corruption and inefficiency of the Italian political system. But it has also repeatedly portrayed both southern Italians and immigrants as problematic and dangerous populations, the Southerners for draining resources from the North through their control of the state and immigrants for being a financial burden and too culturally distant from Italians.

These trends in the politics of race and immigration in Italy represent a challenge and a disappointment to the Italian Left, which had made antiracism and integration the dominant themes in the debate on immigration up until the passage of the new law. The statement of Antonio Pizzinato, CGIL official, presents the some of the key terms of pro-immigrant politics on the Left:

It is necessary for everyone to take as an important goal the creation of a multicultural society. A society that must guarantee equal rights and opportunities for all regardless of the color of their skin. [Cuffaro 1989: 14]

Significant immigration began in the late 1970s and increased throughout the 1980s; there were an estimated 750,000 immigrants in Italy by 1990 (ISTAT 1990a). By the mid-1980s, Italians began to debate the impact of the historic shift of their country from an exporter of labor to an importer of labor, including the question of **razzismo**. The Left had optimistically portrayed Italians as immune from the racism it condemned in South Africa, the United States, and elsewhere in Europe. The events of Florence, although shocking, had been in fact preceded by other attacks, most notably the murder of the South African Jerry Masslo in Caserta in the summer of 1989. These violent acts took place in the context of the widespread exploitation of an immigrant population which for the most part remained illegal and therefore vulnerable, due to the Italian state's inability or unwillingness to pass legislation on immigration until early 1990.

This entanglement of immigration and racial politics in Italy reflects a trend throughout Western Europe of violence and political mobilization against immigrants, refugees, and minorities. In recently reunited Germany, neo-Nazi groups have attacked African, Asian, and Eastern European refugees, as well as Jews; sixteen people died in 2285 attacks in 1992 (**New York Times** 2 December 1992, 17 January 1993). The Republican and other far-Right parties are gaining popular support for their calls for a Germany free of the cultural and racial impurities of foreigners.

In France, Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National continues to enjoy electoral success. This party's premise is that immigrants, particularly of North African heritage, whether French citizens and residents for generations or newly arrived, are France's greatest problem.

Many Europeans have watched with distress this resurgence of intolerance, which has been called the "new racism" (Barker 1981), "neo-racism" (Balibar 1991a), and "differentialist racism" (Taguieff 1989, 1990). According to these observers, the novelty of these ideologies lies in the strategic use of notions of culture and nation, rather than of race itself, to denigrate targeted populations. Faced with the universal condemnation of racism, the haunting memory of Nazism, and a vocal antiracist lobby, ideologues of intolerance are obliged to discard the rhetoric of race for the rhetoric of nation and culture. For these new racists, Europeans and "foreigners" make up culturally and historically defined collectivities whose continued viability is predicated on their physical separation in distinct nation-states. Their claims invariably focus on the role of the state in its capacity to safeguard national culture and to regulate the economy and immigration. The claims of new racists to the contrary, their rhetoric reproduces the logic of racism by promoting a model of humanity as a hierarchy of groups whose natural separation and inequality should be maintained. While postwar immigration from colonies and

the process of decolonization have made racial stereotypes and inequality enduring concerns in Europe, the contemporary context has given these concerns a new urgency. Etienne Balibar attributes the resurgence of nationalism and racism to the current economic crisis, the tumultuous political redefinition accompanying European Community integration, and the fall of Communist Eastern Europe (Balibar 1990b).

Given the political volatility of race and immigration in northern Italy and throughout Western Europe, the absence of significant popular or political expression on these issues in the southern Italian region of Sicily is noteworthy. No anti-immigrant political entrepreneur is active on the island, and popular opinion does not seem receptive to the development of one. Rather, unions, churches, and associations occasionally bring immigration and related issues to public attention in order to promote integration. This dissertation examines how Sicilians of different classes view and interact with African and Asian immigrants and how they give or do not give political expression to issues of race and immigration. I explain Sicilian responses with reference to class experience and consciousness, in the context of local culture and political economy, and Italian popular and political culture. The remainder of this chapter addresses the conceptual issue of race and the historical context of the new racism, then outlines the argument of the dissertation

in more detail.

2. The Concepts: Race, Racialization, Racism

The beliefs and practices described as the new racism, particularly the prevalence of the terms of culture and nation over race itself, show the historical variation of the phenomenon of race. For all its malleability, race remains in many ways anchored in the historical context in which it developed. From the late 15th century, Europeans took control over most of the globe and its peoples, imposing slavery and other forms of unfree labor as they extracted the wealth that would help finance the development of capitalism (Williams 1966; Wolf 1982). Over the course of European expansion there developed, with considerable regional variation, an ideology in which peoples were represented as natural and unequal groupings known as "races" (Cox 1970; Gruber 1980; Gossett 1965; Mörner 1967; Ross 1982). In its most elaborate and "scientific" form, racist ideology explained European dominance as the result of an evolutionary hierarchy of races dominated by large-brained, civilized whites (Stocking 1968). Nationalist ideologies in Europe similarly contrasted the intrinsic racial merit of their own nations against others, and against putatively inferior and different populations within their borders, such as Jews (Balibar 1991c, Barzun 1967).

By the time of Nazism in Germany, however, most of the

scientific community had rejected racism as immoral and unscientific (e.g., Boas 1938; Montagu 1974[1942]). In contemporary scientific usage, race refers only to populations characterized by distinctive, hereditary traits such as skin color, hair texture, and facial features. As a tool for investigating human genetic variation race has been all but abandoned. Phenotypical variation is so wide that the "traditional" racial categories of Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid cannot accommodate large segments of humanity; clinal variation in genetic frequencies further blurs racial boundaries; and non-conforming genes cut across racial lines (Harris 1975; see also Gould 1981).

Despite the official repudiation of theories of racial hierarchy, ideas about race remains key to contemporary experience. Formerly colonized and enslaved peoples whose subjugation was justified by racism continue to be oppressed and to be stigmatized in terms of race (and ethnicity) (Fredrickson 1971). The "development of underdevelopment" of the former colonies by the capitalist center exemplifies continuing patterns of global inequality (Frank 1966), as does the resulting stream of migrants from the underdeveloped areas to the capitalist core (Zolberg 1978). Unequal participation in labor markets, often along racial lines, allocates resources differentially (Bonacich 1972, 1979; Greenberg 1980; Mullings 1978; Wolf 1982). At the same time race has become the language of political struggle (Omi and Winant 1986). In the context of the

formal repudiation of racism, racially marked populations invoke race to lay claim to equal rights and social justice. Their appeals often focus on government because through the legal system, policy, and programs, government can hinder or abet the inequitable distribution of resources.

Given the changing course and significance of race, comparative analysis requires an abstract and atemporal definition of the concept (Miles 1989). The concept of social race, as opposed to the concept of biological race, refers to socially significant populations whose distinctive characteristics are thought to derive from their unique biological makeup (Wagley 1968). Scholars sometimes use the term "racialization" to emphasize that racial categorization is a historically constructed process and not a reflection of supposedly natural divisions of humanity (e.g., Miles 1989; Omi and Winant 1986; Reeves 1983).

The contrast between race in the United States and Brazil illustrates the variability of racialization (Harris 1964, 1970; Kottak 1983; Sanjek 1971; Skidmore 1974). In both countries there exists the same basic continuum of phenotypical features often employed in racial categorization, but racial categories differ. In the United States, this continuum is represented as a biracial system of "black" and "white"; a system of "hypodescent" defines children of a biracial union as members of the less

privileged "black" group. In Brazil, by contrast, racial categorization involves hundreds of terms describing a continuum; categorization is so fluid that an individual's racial classification can vary depending on such factors as social standing, region, and the perspective of the observer. Racial categorization in both countries is ideological because it portrays social divisions as natural ones; it furthermore reflects and justifies racial inequality in which whiteness is linked materially and symbolically with power. The changing racial identity of Irish and Italians in the United States also illustrates the process of racialization. As immigrants in the early part of this century they were vilified as members of inferior, "black" races by nativist political movements, but today they are considered white (Jones 1960).

Because of the importance of phenotype in traditional racial categorization, race is sometimes thought to involve classification and stigmatization on the basis of physical appearance alone. But because race describes socially significant populations considered as natural entities, it involves cultural as well as physical traits and conflates nature and culture. John Swzed (1975) has criticized the overemphasis on phenotypical features in discussions of race. He argues that cultural difference becomes embodied and naturalized through race. Culturally informed behaviors, particularly those involving such basic concerns as eating, sex, and childbirth, are expressed through the

body. The association of body and behavior facilitates the interpretation of cultural difference as rooted in instinct and nature. In the context of racial inequality in the United States, Swzed concludes that whites are not as concerned with prohibiting biological mixing as they are with preventing blacks from adopting white culture, which would expose as false ideas of natural difference and inequality. White access to black culture, on the other hand, is permitted through the controlled process of "minstrelization" in which whites temporarily assume the role of blacks for the purpose of entertainment. Minstrelization is moreover a means for the economic appropriation of black cultural forms by whites.

Race, then, conflates nature and culture by treating socially significant human collectivities as biological entities. In this regard, race is ideology. According to Frank Reeves (1983), ideology refers to a set of enduring, publicly shared beliefs regarding people's relationship to the world and social relations within it which explain, justify, or challenge these relationships. Following Antonio Gramsci, I treat ideology as part of the strategies and practices through which historically specific class coalitions attempt to consolidate hegemonic power in the face of opposition (Hall 1986). Ideology is more than a coherent political statement, however; it is also the contradictory "common sense" with which people approach their world. Given the context of racial inequality, race

often serves to explain and legitimate inequality by casting the supposed merits and demerits of groups in the unalterable terms of nature. Following Balibar (1991a), I shall use racism to refer to ideologies and practices that rank and naturalize populations.

As Robert Miles has noted, race (and racism) has several important characteristics as ideology. As a form of representation, race is dialectical, linking the definition of Other to that of Self. In the writing of the late 19th century, the savagery imputed to non-whites contrasted with notions of white "civilization." Ideologies of race also vary in their form of expression from the systematic statements of intellectuals, which have been the standard focus of much analysis, to the contradictory and everyday expressions of working people and others (Miles 1989). As a social product, ideologies of race are historically specific. Spanish ideologies of race in their New World colonies, for example, were conditioned by Iberian notions of "purity of blood" as it related to social standing (Mörner 1967). Because ideologies of race are defined by thematic similarities and not by specific content, it follows that the explicit use of the terminology of "races" is not a necessary precondition for the classification of ideologies as racial. As long as socially significant categories are treated as natural and unequal entities, it is possible to speak of "racism without races" (cf. Banton 1970). Indeed,

in the context of the repudiation of "scientific racism" and decolonization, culture has increasingly replaced explicit reference to race in discussions of racial inequality, in Western Europe as in the United States (Essed 1991).

The culturalization of race underlines its essentially political and contested status. Almost from its inception race served as a means of social stratification in which subjugated peoples were denied rights and access to other resources on the basis of race. As Eric Wolf has observed, "Racial terms mirror the political process by which populations of whole continents were turned into providers of coerced labor" (Wolf 1982: 380-381). While slave rebellions and other forms of resistance show that racist ideology never went unchallenged, the institutions of slavery and, later, Jim Crow in the United States insured that non-whites would remain defined by their political categorization more than their political participation. In the struggles of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, blacks gained, in particular, the formal repudiation of racism by government.

According to Karen Blu (1979), black civil rights activism transformed the meaning of race and ethnicity in the United States. By asserting their political rights as grounded in cultural identity and experience, blacks transformed race from a category of political oppression to one of political participation or ethnicity. Their

example, moreover, sparked the movement of Euro-Americans to define themselves in ethnic terms. Ironically, the consequent ascendancy of the pluralist or ethnic model of society works to deny political claims made on the basis of race because it privileges the notion of equivalent cultural identities and invalidates the idea of oppression and racism (Essed 1991; Vincent 1974). At the same time affirmative action policies constitute a recognition of racial inequality. In this context the term "people of color" represents a strategy of racial minorities--blacks and Latinos primarily--to call for fuller political acknowledgement of their common experience of historical as well as contemporary racism.

Finally, race as ideology interacts and "articulates" with other ideologies such as sexism and nationalism that posit reified, hierarchical categorizations (Miles 1989). Women have often been defined primarily as childbearers and so excluded from important positions outside the home; in this regard they are central to the reproduction of race, which is considered to be biological in nature. More often than not, dominant (white) groups have sought to avoid "racial degeneration" by preventing unions between white women and non-white men; alternatively non-white women have been portrayed as perpetuating their own inferior stock to such a degree that it threatens to overwhelm the dominant group (Miles 1989). At the same time, nationalist ideology has been consistently supplemented by racism (Anderson

1983; Barzun 1967; Poliakov 1974). According to Balibar (1991c), nationalism and racism are co-determined when the "nation" is constructed as the territorial embodiment of a people whose claim to the land is based on a stipulated heritage composed of culture, language, and blood. Nationalism, like racism, furthermore posits a hierarchical relation between supposedly natural human collectivities both within and between nations. Nationalist ideologies contrast their nation's authentic core to the inauthentic groups within it, as happened so powerfully to the Jews in European history. They also array their nation in a global hierarchy of nation-states, which may be themselves also lumped into racially and culturally designated categories such as "European."

As an ideology, racism drives, reflects, and legitimates racial inequality by representing historically constituted relations of inequality between racialized populations as the outcome of fundamentally different and unequal group endowments. Various practices, such as political subjugation and unfree labor, have historically enforced and played off of racial categorization. In contemporary capitalist economies, labor markets are a crucial mechanism for the reproduction of racial (and ethnic) categorization and inequality. The relegation of racial minorities to the worst paying and least secure jobs through informal and formal means amounts to a "colonial" system or "racial regimes" (Barrera 1977; Blauner 1972;

Greenberg 1980). Most white workers are protected from competition by the high pay and prestige associated with the higher capital-to-labor ratios prevailing in their segments of the labor market (Gordon, Edwards, and Reich 1982). They are furthermore able to command higher wages from capital in contrast to the racial groups whom they seek to exclude from similar privilege; in this way inequality in employment gives salience to racial and ethnic categorization (Bonacich 1972, 1979).

Racial inequality in the labor market interacts with disadvantage in other regards. The terms "structural" and "institutional" racism have been used to refer to the combination of mutually reinforcing inequality in the labor market, in government policy, education, housing, and ideology that underwrite systematic racial oppression and perpetuate racial categories (Blauner 1972; Carmichael and Hamilton 1967). The concept was first developed in the United States in the 1960s to explain the continuing subordination of blacks (and other minorities) in the absence of official racism; it also countered prevailing treatments of racism which focused on the prejudice of individual whites. For all its power, institutionalized racism remains a vexing concept. Philomena Essed (1991) has shown the importance of locating the mundane practices of "everyday racism" by which racial inequality and racist ideology are reproduced. Miles (1989) has criticized the simplistic white/black dichotomy embedded in the concept of

institutional racism, which for example obscures class relations within the two groups. He also points out that a focus on function (i.e., racial oppression) borders on the teleological and preempts the question of ideology and intent. He suggests that the concept be restricted to "exclusionary practices" grounded in racist ideology and to racist discourse, including discourse altered to appear non-racist. In this dissertation I shall focus on race (and racism) as a particular kind of ideology and practice which are reproduced in daily encounters as well as in political action and rhetoric. It will also locate ideology and practice within patterns of political and economic inequality, whether identifiably racist or not. The term race will be used to refer in a general way to all matters identified in European usage as racial, including racialization, antiracist politics, racist ideology, and racial inequality.

3. The New Racism

The general processes of the construction and use of racial categories discussed above throw light on the phenomenon of the new racism in Europe. The new ideologies can be considered racist to the extent that they identify socially significant populations as both natural and threatening, and so explain and justify their vilification, marginalization, and exploitation. By this definition, much of what is called the new racism is indeed racist in

character, as Etienne Balibar, Pierre-André Taguieff, and others have argued. The claims of new racist politicians to the contrary, their rhetoric, proposals, and policies exemplify racist ideology. Portrayals of non-Europeans as threats to European cultural integrity, social peace, and economic vitality belie the assessment of these Others as inferior and dangerous. Proposals for the repatriation of targeted populations and the systemic marginalization of them through discriminatory measures in Europe show how Others are treated as natural, unchanging entities whose basic inferiority cannot and should not be altered through government programs. These ideologies, moreover, exonerate popular hostility to immigrants by depicting it as the natural response of human groups to protect their cultures from alien impurities. By the same token the proposals of antiracist groups for the dissolution of racial divisions and inequality are claimed to run counter to human nature and paradoxically engender racism by the wrong-headed sponsorship of cultural mingling.

The new ideologies often center on the role of the state because it regulates immigration, defines citizenship and rights, administers services, oversees the economy, and sanctifies national culture. For this reason they foster an entanglement of nationalism and race in contemporary Europe. Le Pen, for example, would preserve the integrity of France by instituting a system of "national preference" which would halt immigration, allow for repatriation,

reserve jobs for nationals, and create legal distinctions between "real" French and "foreigners" (Taguieff 1989: 47-8). Significantly the category of foreigner does not include the numerous Italians, Portuguese, and Spanish who have remained in France from the great postwar labor migrations. Rather it focuses residents from former colonies and possessions, especially in North Africa, including many with French citizenship.

Key features of the new racism, particularly the emphasis on nation and culture, and the conflation of immigration and race, stem from recent historical developments in Europe. The centrality of the cultural in the new racism, for example, reflects changing uses and evaluations of the terms race and racism. After World War II, racism, by its association with Nazism, came to epitomize the most repugnant and immoral of political ideologies. Contemporaneously, many in the scientific community rejected the concept of race as ideologically tainted by colonialism and Nazism, as well as unproductive for the study of genetic variation (Montagu 1964). In short the repudiation of racism and the attack on the race concept itself made the use of racial terminology politically disadvantageous and morally suspect in postwar Europe. Moreover, as the massive postwar demand for imported labor summoned millions of foreign workers, many from (former) colonial possessions, the issue of race became more urgent but also ever in need of camouflage.

From the 1970s, some Europeans began to apply the term racism, which in the postwar period had been reserved for descriptions of Nazi anti-Semitism and European colonialism, to the exploitation and marginalization of immigrants (Castles 1984). In contrast to neo-Fascist extremists, representatives of mainstream political parties who opposed increased rights and opportunities for immigrants recast their language to avoid any hint of racial terminology. At the same time the ascendancy of the pluralist or ethnic model of society in the United States and Western Europe masked the question of racial identity and inequality (Essed 1991).

Reeves' (1983) study of British political discourse on the immigration laws of 1962, 1968, and 1971 demonstrates how Conservative politicians performed a strategic "ideological deracialisation" of political discourse while they in fact institutionalized policies detrimental to non-white immigrants. By skillful manipulation of rhetoric, politicians often both shielded themselves from charges of racism and communicated their real intent to many white voters hostile to blacks. In response immigrants primarily from the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean forged a political alliance as "blacks" with the aim of fighting what they viewed as state supported racism (Sivanandan 1982, 1983; Mullard 1985).

Throughout contemporary Europe new racist and antiracist political forces are thus arrayed in a constant

confrontation in which each side's terms and arguments are honed in opposition to the other. As Balibar has shown, new racists have incorporated and reinterpreted key elements of the antiracist tradition, such as the idea of cultural integrity as expounded by Levi-Strauss and other anthropologists. Le Pen and others argue that the insurmountable cultural difference between Europeans and non-Europeans makes the assimilation of immigrants difficult and tension-provoking. According to them, antiracist policies of cultural pluralism inevitably produce a natural reaction of defense against cultural Others.

While questions about the legacy of colonialism and racism have accompanied discussions about immigrants throughout the postwar period, current political mobilization and violence have given old concerns a new urgency. Balibar (1991b) has suggested that a powerful confluence of political-economic transformations underwrite this new racism. According to him, the collapse of Communism in the East and the imminent integration of the European Community have provoked a profound "identity panic" over definitions of Europe and the role of the state. At the same time, economic restructuring and recession are deskilling both Europeans and immigrants. In the context of this insecurity, Europeans have drawn on the "ideological schema" of anti-Semitism and colonialism to identify as problematic the non-Europeans within their

midst. That many of these foreigners enjoy legal protections only intensifies the contradictions of the quest for European identity. Proponents of the new racism want the state to address these issues as it defines rights, legitimates national cultural identity, and regulates the economy. The crisis of the state thus conditions a linking of racism and nationalism:

In essence, modern racism is never simply a **'relationship to the Other'** based upon a perversion of cultural or sociological difference; it is a relationship to the Other **mediated by the intervention of the state**. Better still--and it is here that a fundamentally unconscious dimension needs to be conceptualized--it is as a **conflictual relationship to the state which is 'lived' distortedly and 'projected' as a relationship to the Other**. [Balibar 1991b: 15]

The new racism encompasses a trend in contemporary political ideologies in Western Europe, but the ideologies themselves vary in content, intensity, and popular support, as do the antiracist movements contesting them. At issue, above all, is the political redefinition of Europe, the allocation of resources among citizens and resident foreigners, and the relationship of an integrated Europe to the rest of the world. The targeted populations are quite diverse and include recent immigrants and refugees, Jews and Gypsies, and settled immigrant communities. The relationship of these populations to their European countries of residence is also complex: some come from former colonial possessions and claim European citizenship,

others come from the Third World or the former Eastern bloc, while Jews possess both European citizenship and a strong supra-national identity. On occasion, these groups are portrayed in explicitly racist terms, as when the recently outlawed "Nationalist Front" in Germany called for the removal of "foreigners" and the establishment of a racially pure Fourth Reich (*New York Times* 29 November 1992). The new racism more commonly lumps these populations together as "immigrants" and "foreigners." In this "immigration complex," targeted populations are held responsible for such diverse problems as crime, unemployment, and declining social services--problems that are treated as resolvable in their absence (Balibar 1991e). In this dissertation I shall use "immigrant," and occasionally the "Other," as shorthand for these diverse and embattled populations because most are immigrants or are descended from immigrants, and because the question of race is indissolubly linked to immigration in postwar, postcolonial Europe.

More often than not, anti-immigrant ideologies are racist, based on the definition developed above. Although such ideologies do not always fulfill the definition of racism, this analysis will not be trained primarily on whether the new racism departs from or essentially replicates earlier racist discourse. Rather, it will concentrate on the variable form and expression of this new discontent, on its contradictions, on its relationship to

other ideologies, especially nationalism, and on its relation to political economic transformations.

4. Outline of the Dissertation

In the context of growing nationalism and racism in Europe, the absence of anti-immigrant political expression in Sicily merits attention. This dissertation provides an ethnographic account of Sicilian reactions to recent African and Asian immigration to Italy. It is based on a year of fieldwork conducted in 1990 in the capital city of Palermo, in addition to visits throughout Sicily and trips to Rome and Florence. The study addresses Sicilian responses through two principal avenues: class variation with regard to Sicilian evaluations of immigrants in Palermo, and the way the themes of immigration and race find political expression in Sicily as compared to northern Italy.

An underdeveloped region with a long history of emigration, stigmatized within Italy as part of "Africa," Sicily provides an interesting site for the study of local ideologies of race and immigration in Europe. For nearly a century poverty and political repression have generated waves of emigration, directed first overseas and later to Western Europe and Northern Italy, reaching postwar highs in the 1960s and 1970s. Today emigration is rarely an option but most Sicilians have been personally influenced by the emigrant experience in one way or another. The

immigration of Africans and Asians from the 1970s represents a novel shift in migratory flows for Sicily. This new immigration is nonetheless a phenomenon that many Sicilians can appreciate through their own experience. Like Sicilian emigrants in the past, the 15,000 to 30,000 Tunisians, Moroccans, Senegalese, Ghanians, Filipinos, Sri Lankans, Cape Verdians, Mauritians, and others living in Palermo have accepted jobs refused by local residents. Asian and West African women, and occasionally Asian men, work as domestics in the offices and homes of bourgeois New Palermo. African and Asian men wash dishes in restaurants, haul crates of produce at the city's markets, and do various day work. Senegalese and increasingly Moroccan men sell inexpensive items as street vendors. The most destitute wash car windshields in the hope of obtaining spare change or turn to begging, which happened increasingly during the course of my research. The North African and Senegalese immigrants are mostly male, and are the largest, most visible and most transient sections of the immigrant population in Palermo. The Asian and West African populations, in contrast, are smaller, more stable, and predominantly female, with the exception of the Sri Lankans who come often as families.

Also key to the reception of immigrants is the strong sense among Sicilians that they are marginalized from national political life by the Italian state in Rome, and economically exploited by big business in the Italian

North. Sicilians also resent the widespread anti-southernism--some would call it racism--of northern Italians. This finds expression in the pejorative name **terrone** [pl. **terroni**], which encapsulates the stereotype of the lazy, rude, and dangerous Southerner. The racial overtones of **terrone** are underlined by the disparagement, common in the Italian North, of Italy to the south of Rome as "Africa." The gulf separating the North and South dates at least to the unification of Italy in the late 19th century. But it was the immigration of Southerners to northern Italy in the 1960s and 1970s and their relegation to the bottom of the labor market, together with discrimination in housing and services, that gave **terrone** its powerful association with exploitation and stigmatization. Recently, the new political movement, Lega Nord, has played off anti-southern stereotypes in its attacks on what it calls the "southernist state," run by and for Southerners. Given their place within Italian culture and politics, Sicilians tend to be cynical with regard to the virtues of national culture. In contrast to the exclusive notion of national cultural identity promoted by Le Pen, for example, many of the main public institutions and associations in Sicily highlight the cultural diversity of Sicilian history and the emigrant experience in an effort to promote the tolerant integration of new immigrants. Working people in Sicily, however, are particularly hesitant to make common cause with

immigrants, despite their sympathy for the hard life that accompanies immigration.

Sicily's large immigrant population, coupled with unemployment as high as 25%, make up the material basis for conflict over jobs. The issue of state intervention on behalf of immigrants is also important. Sicilians, like other Europeans, are worried about how immigrants will affect their security in an integrated Europe where the freedom of capital is given priority over the maintenance of current consumption standards and services.

The remainder of the dissertation is divided into six chapters (II-VII). Chapters II and III establish the context for the study. Chapter II places immigration to Italy and Sicily in the perspective of postwar immigration in Western Europe. It contrasts earlier Italian and especially Sicilian emigration with the current immigration from Asia and Africa. It also describes how immigrants have become racialized in Italy through the three processes of labor market segmentation, politics, and popular culture. The distinguishing features of the Sicilian and Palermo political economy are described in Chapter III. "Modernization without development" characterizes the Sicilian economy because increased living standards are based not on real development but continued dependence on outside markets and state subsidies. Class structure in Palermo is bipolar and contrasts a (petite) bourgeoisie linked to a massive public sector to a large population of

working people without stable employment. Political elites tied to the mafia perpetuate Sicilian dependency by manipulating scarcity through a system of patronage; their power is based in large measure on control of the public sector. This political system stifles popular political mobilization by distributing resources through small coalitions and eschewing public channels of decision making and debate. As a consequence political expression is thwarted, on immigration as on other issues.

In Chapters IV and V I compare working-class and bourgeois interactions and interpretations of African and Asian immigrants. These chapters consider broad differences in class experience and consciousness, Italian popular culture and political tradition, and Sicilian ideas about the obligations of former emigrants to current immigrants. I begin with the question of "working-class racism" in Chapter IV because accounts of the new racism, as well as earlier work on post-war immigration to Western Europe, often suggest that working people are structurally inclined towards racism by their fundamental insecurity under capitalism. Working Palermitans indeed worry about competing for jobs with immigrants, whom they call "Turks" (although none come from Turkey), but rarely treat immigrants as naturally constituted, dangerous groups or call for their exclusion. The views of working Palermitans are grounded in local conditions and class experience, and are defined by an ambivalence which both accepts immigrants

as fellow poor and denigrates them as undeserving of opportunity in Italy. Given the suppression of political expression under patronage, and given this deep ambivalence, there is little potential for political mobilization against immigrants among working Palermitans.

The bourgeoisie, in contrast, express an explicit and sophisticated antiracism concerning those whom they call "immigrants of color," as I describe in Chapter V. These views draw on strong traditions of solidarity in Italian political culture, as well as on the ideas of the local intelligentsia concerning a Sicilian model of tolerance and integration. The dominance of the bourgeoisie over foreign workers and notions of the relative aptitudes of different immigrant groups, however, cloud the ideal of antiracism. Paradoxically, those working Palermitans who live and work with immigrants check their identification with them by claiming their own Sicilian superiority, while those who seek the distinction of hiring foreigners as servants proclaim an ideology of human solidarity that would dissolve racial divisions.

Chapter VI examines the institutions and organizations in Palermo that create the local debate on immigration and racism, and compares these politics to those of northern Italy. The apolitical acceptance of immigrants in poor Sicily contrasts with the highly politicized response to them in the rich North, as exemplified by the controversy surrounding the anti-immigrant violence and march in

Florence. While this regional variation may be explained in part by the greater numbers of immigrants in the North, immigration is also significant in the South. Sicily is in fact the Italian region with the third largest immigrant population (approximately 100,000), behind Lazio and Lombardy, the regions including Rome and Milan respectively. Rather, the causes of this variation are to be sought in patterns of regional culture and political history. The northern "leagues" draw on widespread anger towards the Italian state and popular anti-southernism to demonize immigrants and Southerners alike, at the same time that government programs and institutional activity for immigrants place immigration and race at the center of political debate. A stifling clientelism in Sicily and the rest of the South, by contrast, thwarts the political expression of popular opinions, including those concerning immigration. I argue that this suppression of political mobilization in Sicily, as much as the Sicilian model of tolerance developed by local institutions and organizations, accounts for the absence of anti-immigrant politics in Sicily.

Chapter VII concludes the dissertation. It begins with a summary of the principal findings of the study, then situates the Sicilian materials within the Italian and West European contexts. It develops the idea of working-class self-hatred and structural insecurity under capitalism to relate the ambivalence of Sicilian workers to the anti-

immigrant views of their European counterparts. It also contrasts the uneven politicization of race and immigration in the Italian North and South to underline the centrality of the state in the formation of racial politics in Europe.

Chapter II

Race and Immigration in Italy

Postwar immigration first posed the issue of a multiracial and multicultural Europe, but these concerns have been given an urgency by current European Community integration. The specific forms and contexts of the conflation of race and immigration vary considerably. The colonial legacy above all structures debate in Britain, France, and the Netherlands, while it also interacts with the postwar emigration history of Portugal and Spain. Developments in Germany are shaped on the one hand by a Cold War era system of granting political asylum which many would like circumscribed, and on the other by a massive postwar immigration of foreign workers which the government views as temporary ("Germany is not a country of immigration"). In Italy, the legacy of almost a century of emigration, rather than the brief colonial history, conditions debate over immigration, particularly in the southern regions such as Sicily which have sent out the majority of emigrants.

This chapter describes immigration to Italy and the increasing importance of race. The transformation of Italy from an exporter to an importer of labor is part of a broader shift in postwar immigration. In the early postwar period, core Western European countries sought additional labor power in Europe's periphery and in colonial and

former colonial possessions. Hundreds of thousands of Sicilians streamed northward at this time to work in the factories and construction sites of Germany, France, Switzerland, and Northern Italy. From the mid-1970s, all Western European countries, including former countries of emigration such as Italy, experienced immigration from countries outside Europe. In contrast to the earlier immigration, this was increasingly unregulated, clandestine, and permanent. Immigration and race became increasingly synonymous as immigrants were often seen as non-white and non-European. Foreign workers in Italy are not seen exclusively in terms of race, but here too race and immigration have become indissolubly linked through three processes: the participation of immigrants in a segmented labor market, political debate on racism, and stereotypes of non-whites as communicated through popular culture. In Sicily the process of racialization is complicated by regional culture and history. Sicilians themselves have long experience as immigrants in segmented labor markets, particularly in northern Italy. Many Sicilians furthermore believe they have been racially stigmatized as "Africans" and *terroni* by Northerners.

1. Italy from Emigration to Immigration

Italy, perhaps more than another other country in modern European history, could be described as a country of emigration. Over twenty-six million Italians went abroad

in search of work in the period 1871-1971, although about half returned. Large-scale emigration from Italy began in the final years of the 19th century, as part of the mass exodus prompted by industrialization and the commercialization of agriculture in which some fifty million people emigrated from Europe in the century following the Napoleonic Wars (Wolf 1982: 362-364). By 1890, the major source of emigration had shifted from Northern and Western Europe to the South and the East. It was at this time that the export of wheat gave way to the export of labor in Sicily (Schneider and Schneider 1976). From 1880-1920, one out of every four Italian immigrants to the United States was a Sicilian (Gabaccia 1984: 54). After the restrictive emigration policies of the Fascist period and the upheavals of two World Wars, Italian emigration abroad increased again after 1945, compelled by widespread poverty and condoned by a government eager to diffuse the anger of an underemployed peasantry (Giardesco 1988).

As postwar reconstruction gave way to economic boom in Europe, the destination of Italians shifted from the traditional, overseas destinations in the Americas and Australia to the industrial heartlands of Western Europe. By 1960, three out of every four Italian emigrants left for other countries in Europe, especially France, Germany, and Switzerland (Melotti 1989). In much the same way Italians from the poor rural North and South surged to the

"industrial triangle" of northwest Italy after the 1950s. These movements decreased sharply after the mid-1970s due to economic crises and restrictions on immigration.

In the last fifteen years, Italy has become a country of a new form of immigration, much to the surprise of its politicians and citizens. Hundreds of thousands of Asians, Africans, Middle Easterners, and Eastern Europeans have come to Italy, attracted by a burgeoning economy and the near absence of restrictions on entry.

The transformation of Italy from a country of emigration to one of immigration reflects broad trends in immigration in postwar Europe. The mid-1970s represents the turning point in these trends, in terms of the origins and destinations of immigrants, their employment, and patterns of capital accumulation. In this shift Africans and Asians replaced Southern Europeans as immigration expanded from several core countries to all of Western Europe. In contrast to the often regulated and temporary form of earlier immigration, the new immigration is characteristically, unregulated and undocumented, and it appears to be permanent. Immigrant employment has also shifted from industry and construction to work in all sectors in the transition from industrial to post-industrial patterns of capital accumulation.

2. "Guestworkers" and the Postwar Economic Boom

Foreign workers played a significant role in postwar reconstruction and the subsequent economic boom in Western Europe. Soon after World War II, full employment in the core countries created great demand for additional labor. Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack (1985:490) estimate that the foreign population in seven countries--Belgium, France, Germany, Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland--grew from seven million in 1960 to 13 million in 1970, not including those who possessed a separate legal status as (former) colonial subjects.¹ This movement of laborers took two main forms. In the case of Britain, the Netherlands, and to a lesser extent France, immigration and refugee movements (e.g., the expulsion of Indians from East Africa) from colonies and ex-colonies contributed much of the needed labor power. More importantly, most Western European governments actively recruited foreign workers, usually by means of bilateral accords, from poor Southern Europe and from Turkey. Governments, always important in regulating and defining labor migration, became extraordinarily active in soliciting foreign workers from the late 1950s (Castles and Kosack 1985; cf. Miles and Satzewich 1990). Germany, which had already absorbed some eight million refugees in the aftermath of World War II,

1. The legal status of colonial immigrants varied from visa-less travel, to residence and work permits without citizenship, to naturalization and eventual citizenship. Refugee status more commonly leads to a processs of citizenship.

secured needed labor through agreements with Italy (1955), Greece (1960), Spain (1960), Turkey (1961), Portugal (1964), and Yugoslavia (1968) (Therborn 1987: 1185). The regulated importation of wage laborers began in the 1950s and accelerated throughout the 1960s and 1970s until 1973-4, when most governments imposed restrictions on immigration in the face of economic crisis.

The majority of foreign workers entered the labor process as **gastarbeiter** or "guestworkers," as temporary foreign wage-laborers were euphemistically called in German-speaking countries (Berger and Mohr 1975; Bohning 1984; Castles and Kosack 1985). Typically, these men worked the hardest and dirtiest jobs in industry and construction. Government restrictions on length of stay, mobility, and family entry, as well as employer discrimination and lesser qualifications confined migrants to subordinate positions in the labor market. Foreign workers of colonial origin in France and Britain similarly held mostly manual and semi-skilled positions.

Foreign workers had an important impact on class structure in Western Europe. Although governments and many foreigners regarded their role as temporary, and although many did in fact return home, foreign workers became a structurally vital component of the Western European economy. By the late 1970s, they made up 6% to 10% of the population. Castles and Kosack (1985) conclude that by the early 1970s foreign workers constituted a separate and

lower "strata" of the working class. Foreign workers held predominantly manual and semi-skilled jobs, suffered disproportionately from unemployment, and received poor quality housing, education, and health care. They were confined to a solitary existence by restrictions on marriage and family reunification. They were furthermore separated through racism and indifference from the indigenous workers whose upward mobility they underwrote and who hesitated to treat them as equals.

As a supplier of migrant labor, Italy played an important, if subordinate role in postwar economic expansion. Bilateral agreements and Italy's 1958 entry into the European Community (then the Common Market) facilitated this movement of labor. Recruiting services, travel subsidies, and assistance networks at home and abroad channeled men from poor, often southern, agricultural areas to the industries of the North (Douglass 1983). Italians streamed to France and Switzerland immediately after the war, and by the early 1970s they made up about one-fifth of the approximately ten million foreign workers in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Britain; they made up the largest single foreign population in Germany and Switzerland, and were almost equal to the Spanish presence in France (Castles and Kosack 1985: 5). Most of the emigrants came from the poor South. Italian emigration in this period was, above all, temporary. Few brought their families or stayed more than a year at a time. About

two-thirds of the five-six million Italian emigrants to Western Europe in 1946-1970 returned home (Calvanese and Pugliese 1988: 195; Douglass 1983: 168). Many Italians returned--or were repatriated in the case of Switzerland--because of the 1973-4 restrictions. Since then Italians continue to leave but in much smaller numbers; in contrast to the earlier exodus of manual laborers, contemporary emigrants are reuniting with their families or are highly skilled professionals.

3. Southerners in the North of Italy

In much the same way that Italians filled the factories and construction sites of Germany, Switzerland, and France, many within Italy converged on the "industrial triangle" of Turin, Milan, and Genoa--the engine of Italy's "economic miracle" of 1958-63. Unlike emigration abroad this move tended to be permanent. This was perhaps the most significant internal migration of 1955-71, a period in which over nine million Italians changed residence, typically from rural to urban areas, from South to North (Ginsborg 1990: 219-220). While those from the rural hinterlands of the northern regions of Piedmont, Lombardy, and especially Veneto accounted for most of the early influx to the triangle, by the 1960s Southerners predominated. Driven from the land by the failures of agricultural reform, poor soil, unemployment, and natural disasters such as the 1968 earthquake in western Sicily,

hundreds of thousands of Calabrians, Campanians, Puglians, and Sicilians boarded the northbound **treno del sole** ("train of the sun") in those years. In the period 1955-81, some three million Southerners moved to the North, with Sicilians making up the largest single emigrant group (Ginsborg 1990: 438-9).

Cheap and usually southern labor was an important component of the Italian "miracle" (Douglass 1983; Fofi 1964; Ginsborg 1990; Pelliccari 1970). Southerners were only slowly integrated in the huge workforces of firms such as Fiat and Olivetti. Initially they found undocumented work in construction, small firms, and services. In the notorious "cooperative system," southern labor bosses contracted fellow Southerners out to small firms at a fraction of the legal wage, then extracted their own substantial fee. Until its repeal in 1961, a law from the Fascist period designed to impede internal migration kept immigrants in a precarious state of illegality. Even after their legal status was secure, discriminatory hiring practices ensured that Southerners would remain at the bottom of the labor market. Only in the late 1960s did large firms begin to hire Southerners, particularly those returning from industrial work abroad. These seasoned, dissatisfied Southerners would be decisive in the protracted factory struggles of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Like the experience of Italians abroad, that of

Southerners in the North was characterized by poor living standards, discrimination, and stigmatization, especially early on. Sicilians today remember with bitterness the signs posted at the gates of Swiss parks prohibiting the entry of "dogs and Italians," but with no less bitterness they recall how Southerners were confined to expensive and cramped quarters in downtown Turin and the miserable shantytowns called **coree** on the periphery of Milan, how they were kept in the worst jobs and subjected to poor quality services by Northerners who considered themselves superior. Newspaper accounts of inferior Southerners and the "civilizing values" of northern life, and debate over the dangers of "southernization," promoted ideology depicting Southerners as fundamentally different and inferior. This northern attitude of superiority is encapsulated in the pejorative term for Southerners, **terrone** (literally "earth grubbers"). According to William Douglass (1983: 182) a **terrone** [pl. **terrone**] is "a little, dark uncouth man who is loud of speech, hot-headed and volatile, dangerous when crossed, prone to criminality (e.g., a possible mafioso), given to fathering broods of children, and unconcerned about personal hygiene." Similar unfavorable views of Southerners are common throughout the North. In his study of Bologna, David Kertzer (1980) reports that the workers affiliated with the former Communist Party² frequently abandoned class solidarity with

2. Hereafter referred to by its current name, the

their southern comrades in the name of anti-southernism. With time the position and treatment of Southerners have improved, just as they have for Italian immigrants abroad. But northern quips about **terroni** still provoke southern anger at what they see as their unrecognized contribution to Italy's unprecedented prosperity.

4. The New Immigration

Most Western European countries dismantled the guest worker system in 1973-4 by closing immigration, except for restricted cases such as family reunification. While the "oil crisis" served as the most apparent reason for the change in policy, several processes contributed to make government and business reevaluate the need for foreign workers. First, the social and political costs associated with the guest worker system were rising. Immigrants had been accorded more rights in the context of the protracted demand for labor in the 1960s and many had been joined by their families. With the onset of economic crisis, governments were quick to eliminate further immigration (Castles 1984). Second, changing patterns of capital accumulation and a period of economic downturn decreased the demand for labor. The geographically concentrated industrial production of the postwar boom gave way to a more "global" or "international" division of labor. Firms in the United States and Western Europe acted to cut the

Democratic Party of the Left (PDS).

high cost of labor and reverse declining rates of profit by installing labor-saving devices at home and by investing in factories abroad (Castles 1984; Sassen 1988). Another consequence of economic globalization was an increased segmentation of the labor market in core countries, with a significant demand for temporary, flexible, and cheap labor, typically in the service sector of the "informal" or "submerged" economy, and distributed in rich as well as poor areas (Calvanese and Pugliese 1988; Piore 1979; Venturini 1989). Immigrants, particularly those entering Western Europe after 1973-4 and for the most part undocumented, tended to fill this demand, which increased with resumed economic growth in the 1980s. At the same time, the grave economic and political problems of the Third World freed up so many potential immigrants that analysts characterize this period of immigration as driven by supply, as opposed to the demand-driven years before 1973-4 (Calvanese and Pugliese 1988; Melotti 1989; cf. Bohning 1984).

The restrictions of 1973-4 heralded several important changes in the composition and distribution of immigrants in Western Europe. First, although the restrictions initially lowered the foreign population, in time they worked to consolidate the trend towards permanent settlement and the development of what Castles (1984) calls "new ethnic minorities." Faced with even greater insecurity in their home countries during the crisis, many

foreign workers brought their families and settled in Western Europe. As a result, visible and residentially segregated urban communities replaced the often isolated dormitories of single men.

Second, the immigrant population has become increasingly non-Western and has stabilized in size. The restrictions and unemployment pushed southern Europeans home, where political reform (in the case of Greece, Portugal, and Spain) and economic growth cut the pool of potential emigrants. At the same time new refugees and immigrants from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East continued to move towards Europe. By 1980, about 40% of the immigrants in Western Europe were of non-Western origin. The immigrant population as a whole then totaled at least sixteen million people and represented 7% to 10% percent of the total population in Belgium, France, Germany, Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland (Castles and Kosack 1985: 490-492). Despite these trends, almost two million Italians continue to reside abroad in Europe, making them the second largest immigrant group behind Turks (Castles and Kosack 1985: 493).

Third, the restrictions of 1973-4 deflected much of the continuing stream of people from their traditional destinations in Western Europe to the traditional countries of emigration in Southern Europe, which lacked legislation and controls on immigration. The Economic Community status of these countries further enhanced their attractiveness

for those seeking to gain entrance into a rich and unified Europe. As the economies of Greece, Portugal, Spain, and Italy grew in the 1980s, this unregulated flow of Africans, Asians, and others was absorbed in the informal economy that had begun to develop in the crisis years of the 1970s. A defining feature of the new immigrants was their clandestine or illegal status (Melotti 1989). On the one hand, high aspirations and the supports of the welfare state permitted indigenous workers to refuse sub-standard working conditions and pay. On the other hand, firms unable or unwilling to beat the high costs of mandated minimum wages and benefits increasingly turned to a willing, disadvantaged population of foreigners (Guarrasi 1982a). Because of the undocumented nature of this immigration, estimates of its size vary widely. By the late 1980s, there were about 700,000 immigrants in Spain (McDonogh 1992) and from 300,000 to 1,000,000 in Italy (ISTAT 1990a: 77).

These new developments in immigration to Europe have complicated, not fundamentally changed, the class position of immigrants in European societies. In Castles and Kosacks' terms, they still constitute a lower "strata" of the working class. In the traditional countries of immigration, the colonial immigrants, the remaining guest workers, and their descendants are still concentrated in industry and construction in urban centers, although more women now work, usually in services. By every

socioeconomic indicator, their lives continue to be more difficult than those of indigenous workers (Castles and Kosack 1985). In addition, new undocumented immigrants in Southern Europe, as well as recent undocumented immigrants in the traditional countries of immigration, are concentrated in low-wage, menial, and temporary employment.

5. Immigration to Italy

Immigration to Italy began in significant numbers in the 1970s and grew steadily throughout the 1980s. The enumeration of the immigrant population is at best approximate for several reasons. This immigration is, above all, undocumented (or clandestine) and therefore not represented in official figures. The official figures, moreover, include foreign residents from other European Community states, other industrial countries such as the United States that fall outside the Community, descendants of Italian emigrants with foreign passports, and members of religious orders--in addition to those coming from poor countries in the Second and Third Worlds who constitute what Italians sometimes qualify as **immigrazione dai paesi extracomunitari** ("immigration from outside the Community") and **lavoratori stranieri** ("foreign workers"). Neither term is wholly adequate because many people from industrial countries outside the Community, such as the United States, do live and work in Italy but are not included in these terms. This dissertation follows the common Italian usage

of referring simply to the influx of people from the so-called Second and Third Worlds as immigration.

ISTAT, the Italian statistical institute, recently estimated the number of foreigners in Italy as of late 1989, using official figures and other data. ISTAT (1990a: 73-75) calculates that of the 1,444,000 foreigners present in Italy, 963,000 come from outside the Community, about two-thirds of that latter figure coming from poor countries. While foreigners are present throughout Italy, the highest foreign populations occur in the regions of Lazio (211,000), Lombardy (136,000), and Sicily (141,200); perhaps half of these populations come from poor countries in the case Lazio and Lombardy, and most in the case of Sicily (ISTAT 1990a: 73). These figures are rough estimates, especially in the case of Sicily, where ISTAT estimates are more than four times as high as official figures (ISTAT 1990a: 75).

Large-scale studies conducted for the 1990 National Conference on Immigration corroborated earlier research on immigrants (CENSIS 1990; CNEL 1990). They found immigrants to be typically young, single, female as almost as often as male, about as educated as Italians, predominantly Muslim or Christian, and recently arrived in Italy. Immigrants are very diverse in terms of national origin, intention of remaining permanently in Italy, distribution and mobility within Italy, and participation on the labor market. Most come from Morocco, followed by Tunisia, Senegal,

Yugoslavia, the Philippines, Iran, Egypt, Poland, Brazil, China, and Ethiopia.

The employment of foreign workers varies by nationality, by region, and over time, but a general pattern is evident (CENSIS 1990; CNEL 1990; Pugliese 1989). They work the most menial, low-paying, and hazardous jobs, often in undocumented or "black" (**nero**) work. Undocumented work is very common throughout Italy and forms an important part of the sizable **economia sommersa**, the "submerged" or informal economy. Employers are willing to risk fines in order to avoid paying the state the taxes and other charges (for pension, unemployment, and medical insurance benefits) above and beyond the wage, and which itself can amount to as much as 50% of the wage. **Lavoro nero** covers a spectrum of arrangements in which none, part, or all of an employee's hours and/or wages are documented. Employees accept these arrangements for different reasons such as the desire to avoid paying additional taxes themselves or because they have no other option; in either case present earnings are bought at the cost of long-term security (Blim 1990).

For immigrants, work in the tertiary sector predominates, followed by work in the primary sector and, less commonly, in the secondary sector. Domestic work is the most stable, most often documented, and best paying of the tertiary employment; it is typically found in cities and often involves living with the employer. These

servants are called **colf**, the acronym for the euphemistic term, **collaboratrice familiare** or "family collaborator." Christian women from the Philippines, Cape Verde, and other countries tend to work as **colf**, although some Italians returning from Somalia and Ethiopia in recent decades have brought servants back with them. All groups, but especially North Africans and Middle Easterners, work in low-level positions of varying stability in service jobs, in restoration work, in restaurants, bars, hotels, and gas stations. Many Moroccans and Senegalese ply the trade of itinerant street vendor known as **vu cumprà**,³ selling Africana and inexpensive seasonal objects from seashore to city throughout the country. They are usually unlicensed and their sales vary from day to day and from season to season. Employment in the primary sector is particularly important in the South. Mostly North and Sub-Saharan Africans find unsteady work and low pay as agricultural day laborers. An exception to the unsteady work in this sector is found in Mazara del Vallo in Sicily, where most of the large (5000) Tunisian community works in the large fishing industry. Finally, immigrants find fairly stable work in construction and manufacturing in the North of Italy. After more than 230,000 foreigners received residence and work permits as a result of Law #39 (1990), the previously small demand for foreign workers in northern industry

3. The term **Vu cumprà** is thought to derive from immigrants' mispronunciation of the phrase **vuoi comprare?** ("Do you want to buy?").

increased dramatically, drawing many immigrants up from the South.

6. Immigration to Sicily

The new immigration began relatively early in Sicily and continues to be a significant process. Tunisians came to western Sicily in large numbers from the early 1970s onward, propelled by the poverty and dislocation that resulted from centralized economic planning (1964-1972) and the solicitation of foreign capital from 1972 (Slama 1986). They assumed jobs in fishing and agriculture vacated by emigrants departing for the industrial triangle and beyond (Caldo 1982; Cusumano 1976; Guarrasi 1982a, 1982b; Rovelli 1978). This immigration was characterized by a seasonal movement (using the ferry service in Trapani in western Sicily) between Tunisia and Sicily, except for the stable community employed by the fishing industry in Mazara del Vallo.

At the same time smaller numbers of Filipino, Cape Verdian, and Mauritian women began to work as domestics in Palermo and Catania, often obtaining work through Christian organizations in their own countries (Crisantino 1992). Immigrants are still concentrated in the three western provinces of Trapani, Palermo, and Agrigento, but they are also important in the agricultural areas of the southeast and in Catania (Scidà 1990). Moroccans and sub-Saharan Africans have joined Tunisians in agricultural work in the

countryside. North and sub-Saharan Africans, Ethiopians, Sri Lankans, and others work in low-level service jobs in the cities. Filipinos and others continue to dominate the market for domestic labor, and Senegalese and Moroccans circulate throughout the island as travelling street vendors. As in Italy generally, domestic workers in Sicily have the most secure employment, followed by workers in other services, agriculture, and street vending.

Estimating the size of immigration to Sicily is difficult. Job security for immigrants is much less common in Sicily and the rest of the South than it is in the North, and this creates a continual northward movement of immigrants (CENSIS 1990). Sicily's importance as a point of entry and the seasonal movement of North Africans to and from Sicily also make Sicily's immigrant population quite unstable and transitory. ISTAT (1990a: 73) estimates there may be as many as 100,000 immigrants in Sicily, although the actual may be as low as 50,000. Given the high incidence of undocumented status preceding the amnesty law, it is possible that those who registered constitute the vast majority of the immigrant population. During 1990, more than 40,000 immigrants filed for residence and work permits under the new law. Of these, about 14,000 registered in Palermo and 9,000 in Catania, according to police figures. While the police did not issue a breakdown of the immigrant population, some idea of the composition of the immigrant population is given by the numbers of

libretti di lavoro (registrations at the provincial employment office) issued by the Ispettorato Provinciale di Lavoro di Palermo for June, July, and August 1990. In that period, 633 Moroccans, 363 Tunisians, 335 Ghanians, 230 Sri Lankans, 161 Mauritians, and 89 Filipinos registered. Smaller numbers of people from 30 other countries made the balance of the 2035 **libretti** issued. As in Italy generally, the new immigration in Sicily is characterized by immigrants from a multitude of countries. By the end of October 1990, the Ispettorato had issued 9000 **libretti**, but the composition of the recipients was not available.

7. Law and the Labor Market

An important, some would say distinguishing, feature of immigration to former countries of emigration such as Italy, Spain, and Portugal, is its unregulated and clandestine character (Melotti 1989). The actions of the Italian state up until the passage of Law #39 in 1990 exemplify this pattern in which the relatively unimpeded entry of immigrants with unclear or illegal status created a sizeable pool of vulnerable foreign workers (Guarrasi 1982a; Sciortino 1988; Sestini 1989). Circulating memoranda from the Ministry of Labor (Ministero del Lavoro) regulated the legal status of foreign employees until the mid-1980s. In 1968, memorandum #128 modified #51 of 1963; memorandum #140 of 1979 provided for the legalization of the employment of domestic workers from outside the

European Community. The entry and residence of foreigners, on the other hand, was regulated by a "Public Security" law from the Fascist period (articles 142-152 of the 1931 Testo unico delle leggi di pubblica sicurezza). In 1981, the government sought to close the borders to further entries from the start of 1982 and to give amnesty to those present by the end of 1981. The inability of Parliament to pass the decree into law, however, resulted in yet another memorandum (#14194) in early 1982 from the Ministry of Labor. As in the past, this form of regulation allowed local authorities considerable discretion in interpretation. Only a fraction (6500) of the immigrant population attempted to secure their status through this amnesty.

From the 1982 formal closing of the borders until 1990, the actions of the state were particularly contradictory, allowing the continued entry of foreigners while simultaneously withholding from them the possibility of legal status and protections. Law #943 of 1986 (modified by Law #81 of 1988) formed a partial exception to this rule. The need to institute some form of immigration legislation comparable to that of other European Community partners, the desire to protect Italian jobs in conditions of high unemployment, and pressure from institutions inside Italy, all compelled Parliament to pass legislation. Law #943 again granted amnesty and closed the borders; it also promised legal parity between immigrants and Italians. But

the inadequate and inconsistent processing of permits, as well as the difficulty of securing proofs of employment from employers (who profited from the undocumented employment of foreigners, for whom they did not pay taxes and other legally mandated charges), prevented most foreigners from enjoying the benefits of the law. Only 118,000 of the estimated 700,000-1,000,000 foreigners (from all countries) registered by the end of 1988 (ISTAT 1990a: 77). Moreover, by continuing to allow the entry of foreigners, the state perpetuated its essentially contradictory and crisis-provoking approach to immigration. These stop-gap measures were finally replaced in early 1990, when decree #416 of 1989 was passed into Law #39, which is also known as the "Martelli law" for its sponsor, the Socialist Claudio Martelli.⁴

This comprehensive law concerns the entry, residence, and employment of refugees, foreign students, and foreign workers. The law allows for the expulsion of foreigners who are illegally present or who commit crimes; it temporarily closed the border by limiting entry to refugees, family members of registered immigrants, and those employees expressly summoned by employers. Unlike past border closings, the 1990 closing was quite effective.

4. The full title is "Norme urgenti in materia di asilo politico, ingresso e soggiorno dei cittadini extracomunitari e di regolarizzazione dei cittadini extracomunitari ed apolidi già presenti nel territorio dello stato."

(See Forti (1990) and Nascimbene (1990) for full descriptions of the law and its implementation.) For immigrants present in Italy before the end of 1989, the law provides the opportunity to **regolarizzarsi** or legalize their status with residence and work permits of two years' duration, the right to enroll at public employment offices, and various social services. By the end of the registration period in mid-1990, some 230,000 **extracomunitari** had received their permits (*Giornale di Sicilia* 30 October 1990).

The "Martelli Law" altered, to some extent, the relation of immigrants to the labor market. There was an immediate increase in demand for documented foreign workers in northern industry. In early 1990, most foreigners registering at public employment offices in the North received jobs. In Vicenza, for example, 2,200 of 2,800 obtained jobs, nearly all in industry (Forti 1990:117). This accelerated an ongoing pattern of immigrant mobility from the South to the North, from the inevitability of "black" work to the possibility of documented work and benefits. The legal status granted by work and residence permits, however, does not mean that foreign workers will all be able to document their employment status. Foreign workers, like numerous Italian ones, will continue to accept the terms of "black" work, whether simply to hold on to a job to supplement other work or to avoid paying taxes. This is particularly true for immigrants in the South,

where seasonal agricultural work is typically undocumented.

8. Race and Immigration: The Segmented Labor Market

Immigrants in Italy form a recently arrived but sizable and internally heterogeneous population. Contradictory state policy and the demand for cheap and unprotected labor at the bottom of an increasingly segmented labor market, as well as the meager resources of immigrants, have made them an exploitable labor pool. But immigration here, as elsewhere in Western Europe, is further linked to questions of race and racism. This association varies over time and space because race is a social construction, not a natural attribute of populations whose presence initiates the problematic trajectory of "race relations." The past representation of immigrant populations today considered "white" as racially inferior underlines the essentially cultural and variable nature of this association. Irish laborers, for example, were vilified as "black" in 19th century Britain (Lebow 1976) and as "niggers 'inside out'" in the United States (Roediger 1991). Similarly, nativist movements in the early 20th century United States portrayed Italians and other southern Europeans as inferior races whose immigration should be prohibited (Jones 1960).

Economic subordination plays an important role in the racial categorization of immigrants (and refugees). Racism and the race typing of immigrants are not structurally

inevitable or functionally necessary for their exploitation under capitalism (Miles 1982). But studies of labor market segmentation often demonstrate that working people are divided by job security, prestige, and wages through the varying capital-to-labor ratios of economic sectors, union strategies, and government policies which give valence to ethnic and racial designations and statuses (Bonacich 1972, 1979; Gordon et al. 1982; Greenberg 1980; Wolf 1982).

The preceding description of postwar immigration to Europe showed how immigrants in Italy work in low-skilled, low-wage, temporary, and undocumented jobs. This process is reinforced by the housing crisis faced by foreigners, especially in the North, where high rents, housing shortages, and discrimination have made numerous immigrants squatters and homeless (Cuffaro 1990). Black work, which had no racial connotation, is thus becoming the work of blacks. In this way economic marginalization underwrites the homogenizing racial redefinition of immigrant diversity. It is no accident that the figure of the *vu cumprà*, statistically unrepresentative of the employment of foreigners, has come to be one of the dominant Italian images of immigrants. Homeless and poor, dependent on contact with Italians but independent of any single Italian, these itinerant peddlers embody the marginal Other who personally transports the poverty and hopelessness of the Third World to Italy. It is important to stress however that the process of racialization is in its

formative stages in Italy. Because immigration is so recent, there is not yet the reciprocal determination of institutionalized discrimination and (racial) stigmatization characteristic of the "second generation" or immigrants' descendants elsewhere in Europe (Gilroy 1987; Castles 1984).

9. Race and Immigration: The Discovery of Immigration and the Specter of Racism

The economic subordination of foreign workers builds on and interacts with ideologies of race, it does not itself create them. In Italy, the fusion of the themes of immigration and race is the result in large measure of political activity. Over the last decade, political parties, institutions, and intellectuals--often allied with the large and powerful Left of Italian politics and culture--have often portrayed Italian reactions to immigration in terms of race. On one hand, they criticize the exploitation of foreign workers as racist; on the other, they propose a new pluralistic Italy in which citizens are integrated regardless of race. Only after the debate on immigration was firmly set in the rhetoric of racial equality, and only after the "Martelli law" granted large numbers of foreigners new rights, did there develop the anti-immigrant politics into of the new racism.

While the national debate on immigration dates to the late 1980s, in fact foreigners had been arriving in Italy

since the early 1960s, but their numbers did not increase significantly until the late 1970s and early 1980s. Aside from the occasional book (e.g., Caldo 1982) or union conference (e.g., CGIL 1979), the subject attracted little attention. All this changed in the late 1980s when it became clear that Italy lacked an administrative and even cultural framework for the ever-increasing influx.

By 1988, the year I spent in rural Sicily for my wife's dissertation research, the topic had captured national attention. The media, from serious newspapers to weekly magazines to television variety shows, reported attacks on and discrimination against foreigners, chronicled the situation, and surveyed Italian attitudes to foreigners. Intellectuals worried over the potential for a Le Pen-like xenophobia in Italy and called for tolerance. An increasing volume of social science research also began to be published (e.g., Balbo 1990; Bassetti 1990; Cocchi 1989; Calvanese and Pugliese 1988; Caritàs Diocesana 1985; Gallini 1989; Manconi 1990; SIARES 1988). As churches established programs to aid immigrants, unions and associations sponsored "antiracist" events such as conferences, rallies, and concerts. In Rome, scholars and parliamentarians drew on the example of "S.O.S. Racisme" in France to found "Progetto Italia-Razzismo" (Balbo and Manconi 1990). Immigrants themselves formed associations, both along lines of nationality and across them, as in the case of the Federazione delle Organizzazione e Comunità

Straniere in Italia (FOSCI). They also found representation in some Italian associations. The Associazione Ricreativa Italiana, for example, formed an office concerned with immigration matters and staffed by immigrants, called Coordinamento Immigrati Sud del Mondo (ARCI-CISM). This concern reached a crescendo in 1990, after the "Martelli decree" became Law #39 in January, and after the six-month registration period for foreigners closed in June.

The title of an early book on immigration by the noted journalist Giorgio Bocca (1988) posed the lightning rod question--**Are Italians Racist?** Indeed attacks on foreigners and opinion surveys showing unanticipated hostility to foreigners alarmed many. A study by the Comunità di Sant'Egidio among students at prestigious Roman secondary schools during 1986-7, for example, found 49% viewed immigrants as threatening Italian jobs and 20% saw them as importing dangers such as drugs and terrorism (Comunità di Sant'Egidio 1989 cited in Bassetti 1990: 44). This evidence punctured the myth of **Italiani, brava gente** ("good" or "tolerant" Italians) and activated what Bocca calls "elusive racism," a kind of guilt complex over potential and real racism in Italy. Since World War II, he explains, Italians have learned in school to condemn racism abroad; the absence of significant racial or ethnic communities in Italy facilitated the adoption of a superficial and moralistic stance to racism. As a result,

Italians try to ignore racism at home, which looms as a "nightmare to our good democratic, peaceful, internationalist intentions" (Bocca 1988: 47; cf. Balbo 1989, 1990).

Numerous churches, unions, and associations worked to aid immigrants and publicize their cause with increasing frequency in the late 1980s. These organizations called for responsible legislation to regulate immigration, and they sought to establish structures to assist immigrants with jobs, housing, health care, and legal status. This activity also created a conceptual meshing of immigration and race. The most common terms describing foreigners--"immigrants of color" (*immigrati di colore*) and "blacks" (*neri*)--invoke the language of race, recalling by association racial exploitation and conflict in South Africa and the United States. The renown sociologist, Franco Ferrarotti, for example, named his 1988 book **Beyond Racism: Towards a Multicultural and Multiracial Society**. (The term *extracomunitari* is also common but it also has racial overtones because it refers not to all those who come from countries outside the European Community--its literal meaning--but only to those from poor countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.) By giving salience to immigration as a racial phenomenon, the Italian cultural elite has tapped the powerful contemporary condemnation of racism (and the attendant ethical notion of antiracism) to serve the rhetorical defense of immigrants. As a result,

discussions on a range of topics from the economic exploitation of immigrants, to their legal status, to their political fate naturally turn to racism and antiracism. This why so many Italians worried about the question of racism at a time when few had dealt with immigrants or considered them in racial terms.

In many respects, the Italian intelligentsia has cast the debate on immigration in terms of race by calling for the rejection of racism, actual and potential, through various "paradigms of solidarity" discussed in more detail in Chapters V and VI. The mass media have served as an effective vehicle for the transmission of these ideas, but the media tendency to sensationalize has also fostered the sense that immigration (especially before the enactment of the law and the border closing) was a crisis (CENSIS 1990; Marletti 1989). A minority of intellectuals, moreover, have portrayed immigration as a disaster, likening it to a "tidalwave of unemployed" sweeping across Europe, and arguing that the unregulated influx of racially and ethnically different poor will engender conflict if not racism. But most of the Italian intelligentsia see immigration as more of a resource than a problem. This optimism (at least as of 1990) sets the Italian debate apart from debate elsewhere in Europe. In England, for example, the official position represents the "race relations" problem as commencing with the postwar arrival of West Indian and Asian immigrants (CCCS 1982; Reeves

1983). As Stuart Hall once said, this reveals a "profound historical forgetfulness" of the role of British colonialism in the creation of racial ideology and inequality.

For all its attention to such contemporary themes as the celebration of diversity, the Italian debate is not without a certain naivete. Perhaps the role of the Partisans in the liberation of northern Italy from the Italian Fascists and the Nazis at the end of World War II bears on this tendency. The importance of the Communists in the liberation movement and in postwar politics, particularly in the "Red Belt" of central Italy, may explain the prominence of ideologies of racial equality and the lack of Italian guilt over the Jews and Gypsies surrendered to the Germans in the war. Laura Balbo, co-founder of Italia-Razzismo and member of Parliament, characterizes much of the early debate as "facile antiracism." These antiracists simply declare themselves for what is good ("antiracism") and against what is bad ("racism," "all the racisms") without defining or justifying their terms; or they romantically and uncritically embrace the descriptive term of pluralism as an ideal (Balbo 1989, 1990). A high idealism does indeed typify much Italian debate. Up until the passage of the "Martelli law" and the subsequent closing of the borders, for example, many progressives dismissed as folly even the notion of officially closing the borders because the forces

driving immigration were understood to be too compelling for regulation. According to Balbo, institutions such as churches, unions, and associations embarked on more pragmatic initiatives from 1989 even as they continued to voice a "facile" antiracism. Several were important in bringing about legislative change.

10. Race and Immigration: From Mussolini to Contemporary Popular Culture

In addition to the segmented labor market and Italian politics, the entanglement of race and immigration owes much to the Western ideas about race. Of all the products to issue from some four centuries of European colonialism, race takes a prominent place. In broad ideological terms, colonial subjects were constituted dialectically as racial Others whose biological inferiority and proximity to a state of nature contrasted unfavorably to the superior stock and civilization of Europeans. While European achievements constituted the work of history, the subjugated formed part of natural history (Wolf 1982). Ideologies of nationalism often intersected with racist ideologies, as European nation-states, competing with each other for overseas and European possession, portrayed themselves as natural entities whose superiority issued from their unique cultural and biological legacies.

Such was the broad ideological context of Italy's brief colonial expansion, which began in 1911 with the

invasion of Libya and came to include Eritrea, Somalia, and Ethiopia, among others, all of which were lost in World War II. Although brief, the brutality of Italy's colonizing efforts were on par with European standards, and included the use of mustard gas in Libya and Ethiopia. Mussolini had initially ridiculed the war on Libya, but once in power (1922) he turned to colonialism as a vehicle for asserting Fascist power and glory, particularly in relation to Britain, France, and Germany. According to Dennis Mack Smith (1982), racism figured in Fascist ideology, though never to the same extent as in German Nazism. Particularly after Italian colonialism was initiated, Africans came to be represented as inferior races and were treated as such in colonial policy and practice. Other "inferior races" included the "Spaniards, Romanians, Greeks, and 'Levantine'," indeed even the incorrigible British, who were thought to pale in comparison to the superior Aryan race as represented by robust Italian and German stock. Many of these ideas were codified in the racial laws of 1938, which classified as inferior the external menace of Arabs and Ethiopians as well as the internal danger of the Jews. Mussolini was never convinced of the scientific basis for anti-Semitism in particular, but he put the law to tactical use as an expression of solidarity with a powerful Germany and as means of scapegoating Jews within Italy. It is a measure of Mussolini's ambivalence towards anti-Semitism that Italian Jews were not deported en masse

until the final years of the war (De Felice 1967).

The relation of colonialism and the racial laws to the reception of immigrants in contemporary Italy has not, to my knowledge, been studied. But there appears to be no direct ideological linkage, even in the anti-immigrant politics of the neo-Fascist party, the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI). Colonization was brief, never complete, and the Italian public did not receive the racial laws with enthusiasm. The heritage of Fascism was moreover repudiated during the final years of the war, as partisans liberated parts of northern Italy and the country ended the war on the Allied side. The racist ideologies of Germany and Italy were also condemned at the time and continue to be considered totally unacceptable.

It is the ideological heritage of European colonialism as a whole, rather than Il Duce's attempts to bring glory to Italy in a hierarchy of races and nations, that informs the current meshing of immigration and race in Italy. Despite the official repudiation of racist ideology, race is considered an obvious and significant term of description for much of the poor, non-Western world. Much of the Italian political and popular discussion on immigration, whether in the form of explicit antiracism or conventional race-typing, draws on and reinforces this tendency. Discourse on race continues to be situated in relations of global inequality, as racially marked populations have passed from the political powerlessness of

colonialism to the economic powerlessness of dependency and debt. Inequality is portrayed ideologically as the opposition between "universalistic and progressive" cultures and "irredeemably particularistic and primitive" cultures (Balibar 1990a). This dichotomizing representation is, however, a flexible form of hierarchy. It simultaneously unifies and differentiates: the poor Turkish and Tunisian immigrant are both portrayed as "Arabs" whose presence in the West is problematic, while the Tunisian and Arabian capitalist are treated as acceptable (Balibar 1990d).

An incident described by Bocca (1988) exemplifies this process in Italy. An American bank was to open a branch in Naples and it was rumored that jobs would be allotted to "blacks." Local residents strenuously objected to what they portrayed as the injustice of being passed over for undeserving newcomers. Protests ceased, however, when it was learned that the blacks in question were American. They clearly deserved these positions by virtue of their association with big business from the dominant country in the global economy.

While political and intellectual debate on race in Italy tends to be somewhat moralistic⁵, the complexity and ambivalence of Western attitudes to race finds significant,

5. An exception is the collection of political cartoons first shown in Florence by the Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo dei Paesi Emergenti (Cirillo 1990). In one a smug conservative says, "These antiracists are pathetic cowards: they don't have the courage of their base instincts."

ongoing expression in popular culture. On this fertile ideological terrain the Western Self is contrasted dialectically to the racial Other which becomes the object of fascination and horror, eroticism and derision. Several recent studies of Italian popular images have suggested that movies, advertisements, travel brochures, arcade games, and so-called "porno-comics" (**pornofumetti**) represent the racial (or ethnic) Other as different from (white) Italians by nature and culture. Clara Gallini's (1989) examination of popular images of Arabs reveals a changing stereotype, evoked by images of sand, palm trees, and camels, whose core remains defined by despotism, sexual perversity, extreme gender inequality, and fanatical Islam. This essentializing Orientalism (Said 1978) is reproduced within a political context. Originating during the period of conflict between Europe and the Ottoman Turks, revived by Fascist propaganda, the stereotype of the Arab now speaks to current Middle Eastern conflict. Recent American news media and movies in particular portray Arabs as Islamic fanatics and terrorists. Pier Paolo Leschiutta (1989) finds similar images among school children, university students, and adults in Rome and Naples.

Their findings are paralleled by the double representation of blacks in Italy which presents them as both African savage and glamorous American black sports or entertainment star. According to Alessandro Portelli (1989), the opposed images of blacks perpetuate racial

stereotypes in different ways. The image of the savage is used ironically by intellectuals who claim thereby to reject racist stereotypes; but the continued use of the image perpetuates the idea of blacks as utterly different. The second, more positive, image comes from youth culture but it too lays emphasis on bodily prowess and therefore on natural difference. In my research, I found that Sicilians of all classes also divide their representations of black Americans between the dangerous ghetto and the glamorous sports celebrity, supporting Portelli's claim that the Italian image of blacks is profoundly ambivalent and essentializing. Even southern Italian identification with the exploitation and anger of blacks ultimately shores up the racial denigration it protests: "Rather than identifying with the explorer in the pot we identify with the negroes who dance around him, ready to eat him; but we risk keeping the representation of the scene permanently intact" (Portelli 1989: 97).

In her most recent work, Gallini (1992) argues that popular representations of racial Others, apparently unrelated and varied, sometimes innocuous or ironic, in fact constitute a fabric of "racist discourse" in which Others are defined as fundamentally different and irredeemably inferior. Because whites often employ such images in ironic ways to talk about themselves, the presence and influence of these representations are masked. She gives the example of Italian soccer fans: "...we see

banners being waved with slogans intended to offend the adversary by comparing him to a black man, which is not meant to be offensive to the black man at all--this was not the intention" (Gallini 1992: 211).⁶

11. Race and Immigration: The Sicilian Context

In the transformation of Italy from a country of emigration to one of immigration the language of race has been used with increasing frequency to describe the current and future place of some half a million foreign workers. The salience of race stems from three processes described in this chapter. The integration of immigrants at the bottom of a segmented labor market homogenizes and stigmatizes them; their vulnerability is the product not only of ambiguous legal status, but of the global pattern of inequality to which migratory patterns are linked. Political debate, by focussing on the dangers of potential and actual racism, favors the meshing of terms of immigration and race. The essentializing views of the other common in popular culture further promote the interpretation of immigrants in racial terms.

In Sicily, the experience of anti-southernism and the history of emigration complicate the racialization of immigrants. Many Sicilians see themselves as the victims

6. Similar essentializing conceptions of immigrants are found throughout Europe (e.g., Gilroy 1987; and CCCS 1982 for Britain; McDonogh 1992 for Spain; Van Dijk 1988, 1991 for Holland and Britain; and Grimm and Hermand 1986 for Germany).

of Roman indifference and northern Italian economic exploitation as well as prejudice--if not racism. This is closely linked to emigration. Sicilians often recall how southern Italians in the industrial triangle were confined to the bottom of the labor market, denied opportunities and services, and stigmatized as **terroni**. Sicilian personal experience, national attitude surveys, and political trends in the North show this mean-spirited anti-southernism still thrives, despite substantial material gains made by southern immigrants. Sicilians whose work takes them North tell of overhearing colleagues there deride them as "blacks" and "Africans." Surveys of Italian opinions regarding immigration show that Northerners consistently see Southerners as more objectionable than any foreign immigrant population (Colucci, Segatti, and Rampazi 1989; Frigressi 1989). Racist graffiti and gang violence in the North often target **terroni** and foreigners alike. Non-traditional political parties such as the Lega Nord have also exploited anti-southernism for political gain by tying their not unjustified attack on the incompetence and corruption of the Italian state to the Southerners who supposedly operate the state for their exclusive benefit.

Sicilian understandings of exploitation and marginalization bear on the interpretation of immigrants in Sicily. Some, particularly working people, see immigration as contributing to competition over scarce jobs and poor quality services; as such, immigration represents for them

but the last in a series of hardships attributable to North/South inequality, aided and abetted by Rome. Yet identification with a strong regional culture and history, albeit one stigmatized at the national level, makes Sicilians skeptical of the kind of anti-immigrant politics common throughout Europe that vilifies immigrants as threats to national cultural if not racial homogeneity. As the "blacks" and "Africans" of Italy, moreover, Sicilians confront the Western discourse on race from the ambiguous position of being black in relation to Italy's North but white in relation to new immigrants. This ambiguity certainly does not inoculate Sicilians against racism, as some Sicilians hope, but it does complicate the question of race and discrimination in Sicily. Finally, the experience of emigration is central to Sicilian interpretations of immigrants. While working people understand the hardship that causes and accompanies immigration, it is especially the bourgeoisie and representatives of churches, unions, and organizations who see former emigrants as duty-bound to fight racism and promote the harmonious integration of immigrants in Sicily.

Chapter III

Introduction to the Setting: The Political Economy of Palermo

This chapter presents the features of the urban political economy that bear most directly on patterns of Sicilian-immigrant interaction and the cultural interpretation of immigrants. Postwar Sicily has been characterized by a process of "modernization without development" in which unprecedented increases in living standards have been purchased at the expense of chronic underdevelopment and dependency, exemplified by massive emigration and state subsidies. In Palermo, the weak economy generates a class structure composed primarily of a bourgeoisie whose security rests on the dominant public sector and working people whose marginality derives from political disenfranchisement and unstable employment.

Sicilian economic transformations are closely linked to the behavior of elites, particularly the leadership of the Christian Democratic (DC) party. DC hegemony in Palermo (and in the South generally) rests on its command over the resources of the public sector, which it distributes through patronage, often in association with organized crime--the mafia in Sicily, the camorra in Naples, the 'ndrangheta in Reggio Calabria. Patronage, also known as clientelism, is often defined as a form of unequal exchange between "patrons" and "clients," characterized by a dyadic ties, informality, and the idioms

of friendship and kinship (e.g., Schmidt et al. 1977). It is an important form of political and economic organization in the Mediterranean, where local elites often "mediate" between local populations and the state. Caroline White (1980) and Judith Chubb (1982) have emphasized the essential class character of patron-client relations. Drawing on the example of DC politicians southern Italy, they argue that these elites actively manipulate scarcity and promote modernization without development as strategies for maintaining control. Rather than representing a phase in the inevitable transition to a modern economic and political organization, these patrons perpetuate dependency by reinforcing scarcity. An important consequence of patronage is that it impedes political participation by fostering the individualistic distribution of resources and by holding the organs of the polity hostage.

This chapter closes with a consideration of the place of immigrants in Palermo. Like many local working people, immigrants attempt to make ends meet in the face of unsteady employment, material hardship, and the apathy and corruption of elected officials. With few exceptions, however, the work obtained by foreign and domestic workers differs by wage, security, and prestige. The patronage system discourages the politicization of the immigrant presence. The absence of government initiative, for example, keeps immigration off the political agenda. The suppression of popular participation in politics moreover

limits the potential for mobilizing the local poor against immigrants.

1. Palermo: An Administrative Center

The city of Palermo is located on the northwest coast of the island of Sicily, separated from the toe of the boot of mainland Italy by the narrow Straits of Messina. With 701,782 residents according to the 1981 census, Palermo is the largest city in Sicily, itself one of the most populous of Italy's twenty-two administrative regions, with just under five million residents in 1981. While its economy is the biggest on the island, Palermo is above all an administrative center: it is the seat of the city, provincial, and regional governments. The regional government is particularly large and powerful by Italian standards. Its special "autonomous" status, granted in 1946, gives it much freedom from national government in Rome; its bureaucratic apparatus, moreover, is the product of nearly fifty years of development, whereas most other regional governments were established only in 1970 (Chubb 1982).

The current status of Palermo as capital of Sicily has strong historical antecedents. In the 10th century, Arab rulers made Palermo the capital of the emirate of Sicily. Since then, a series of external rulers, among them the Normans, Catalans, Castilians, and Bourbons have run their affairs from Palermo. Despite recent urban sprawl, the

city still bears the imprint of a millennium as a seat of power, particularly in its monumental architecture, such as the ancient Norman Palace which houses the offices of the regional government.

2. The Urban Economy

As many observers have noted (e.g., Chubb 1982; Guarrasi 1978), the most striking feature of the Palermo economy is the lack of stable employment, as evidenced by low rates of formal labor-force participation, high rates of unemployment and underemployment, and rampant undocumented employment. In its 1987 report on the urban economy, the Banco di Sicilia calculates that only 33% of the population is "active"--employed, previously employed but now unemployed, or in search of a first occupation--and of those above 13 years of age only 44% are active, as compared to the national average of 50%. Of the "active" population of 234,800, 25% are unemployed or looking for a first job. The majority of this 25% are young people; in the absence of job growth, this extremely high rate of youth unemployment will continue to climb because the population of Palermo is young and growing. High rates of undocumented employment mean that employment is higher than official figures indicate, but exactly how much higher is, by definition, impossible to calculate. What is certain, however, is that many in Palermo find themselves in what Vincenzo Guarrasi (1978) calls "the marginal condition"--

marginalized with regard to the productive system and characterized by low and uncertain income.

The dire state of the Palermo economy reflects a broader, long-standing pattern of uneven development within Italy. Since the unification of Italy in 1860, Sicily together with other southern regions has supplied raw materials and labor power to northern industry whose finished goods in turn dominate southern markets. Despite vast improvements in living standards in the South in past decades, the North/South¹ imbalance has been reinforced. In terms of such indicators as industrial production, labor-force participation, employment, and consumption, the South lags far behind the North. In 1989, for example, a national unemployment rate of 12% averaged a 21.1% rate in the South with a 7.4% rate in the North (ISTAT 1990b: 93). Employment in the South is also more prone to be unstable or precarious. In his classic essay on Italian class structure, Paolo Sylos Labini (1974: 180) estimates that 2.6 out of 3.7 million Italians holding "precarious" or unstable jobs in the late 1960s did so in the South.

The paralysis of the southern economy is most pronounced in urban centers such as Catania, Naples, and Palermo (Chubb 1982). These cities are characterized by rapid population growth, poor services, high unemployment, large informal sectors, and social tension. While massive

1. Following common Italian usage, "North" refers to Rome and regions above it, while "South" refers to the regions below Rome.

rural-urban migration caused urbanization throughout Italy in the postwar period, the relationship of population growth to economic development differed regionally. In the North, urbanization was integrated with unprecedented economic expansion based on industrial production, while southern urbanization was predicated principally on vast increases in public spending. The predominance of the public sector in the South caused growth in services and commerce, and has made the tertiary sector the most important sector. This tendency has also meant that construction, which is categorized along with industry proper, has contributed heavily to figures for industrial employment. In the absence of meaningful economic development, however, a large proportion of the swelling urban workforce remains marginalized in unsteady employment and the informal sector.

The Palermo economy, as described by Chubb (1982) and Guarrasi (1978), epitomizes these trends. In the secondary sector, manufacturing, always weak, is characterized by a plethora of small, labor-intensive firms, particularly in clothing and shoe manufacture, woodworking, and metal working. Unlike small northern firms they are not linked to large firms through sub-contracting. Rather, facing constant pressure from northern Italian and foreign products, they survive, when they do, by drawing on abundant, non-unionized, and often undocumented labor. Similar firms predominate in construction where cyclical

demand exacerbates these tendencies.

The tertiary sector drives the urban economy. Whereas the secondary sector accounted for 35% of employment and the tertiary sector 59% in 1971, by 1981 the tertiary sector figures rose to 69% while the secondary sector figure dropped to 27% (Banco di Sicilia 1987). The hypertrophied tertiary sector reflects the primacy of the public sector in Palermo. As Chubb notes, the public sector includes countless municipal, public, and semi-public agencies in addition to more narrowly defined government employment. According to one agency, 35.6% of the city's workforce in the early 1970s was made up of public employees, broadly defined (Chubb 1982: 46). Commercial and service firms replicate the tendencies of the secondary sector. Here, too, a few large concerns contrast with myriad small, often family businesses which have enjoyed state subsidies, and by street vendors (*ambulanti*), both licensed and unlicensed (*abusivi*).

The labor market in Palermo, then, is characterized by a low rate of formal labor-force participation, much unstable employment, and the primacy of the tertiary sector. On one hand, public sector and some private sector employment tends to be steady and drives the demand for services, commerce, and housing. On the other, many small, undercapitalized firms in manufacturing and construction survive on the cheap, making use of non-unionized labor supplied by high unemployment rates and population growth.

As a result, many Palermitans pursue "refuge" activities in the informal sector, sometimes in manufacturing and construction, but primarily in services and petty commerce. Particularly among the very poor these activities shade into petty crime and illegal activities like the sale of contraband. But crime and illegal economic activities are by no means confined to the marginal population. Mafia trade in drugs and involvement in construction and other activities represents a significant, if unquantifiable, part of Palermo's economy (Santino 1989).

3. Class Structure

The class structure of Palermo is basically tripartite, consisting of a bourgeoisie proper, a petite bourgeoisie, and, beneath them, a heterogeneous working population characterized by unsteady employment and marginalization. The small **alta borghesia** ("high bourgeoisie") of landowners, heads of large firms, and professionals made up 6.7% of the active population in 1981. The considerable power of many in this class is based not so much on the control of industry, which is insignificant as noted above, but on real estate and construction interests. Indeed one-third of the professionals, who together make up 80% of the class, are directly tied to postwar urban expansion as architects, engineers, and surveyors.

The power and numerical significance of the middle

classes or petite bourgeoisie (**piccola borghesia**) in Palermo owe much to the elephantine public sector in contemporary Italy. In the absence of important productive activities in the South, public spending has underwritten the expansion of the middle classes, whether directly through public administration or indirectly through increased demand for services and commerce (Sylos Labini 1974). In the Italian literature, the middle classes comprise two principal categories, the white-collar petite bourgeoisie (**piccola borghesia impiegatizia**) and the relatively independent petite bourgeoisie (**piccola borghesia relativamente autonoma**), both enjoying relatively high and steady incomes. From 1971 to 1983, the urban petite bourgeoisie in southern Italy increased their share of the active population from 36.6% to 46.8%, an increase almost wholly attributable to a doubling of jobs in public administration (Sylos Labini 1986: 207). In 1981, the petite bourgeoisie accounted for fully 51% of the active population of Palermo, compared to 45% for the province of Palermo and 44% for the region of Sicily, a difference which reflects the concentration of administrative jobs in the capital city (Banco di Sicilia 1987: Table 1.12). For the sake of simplicity I shall refer hereafter to all categories of the bourgeoisie simply as the bourgeoisie.

Both the primacy of the public sector and its particular form have consequences for the importance of the bourgeoisie. The frighteningly large discretionary powers

wielded by Italian civil servants, the pervasiveness of clientelism in the public sector, and the resulting inefficiency are legend (Ginsborg 1990). It has been said that in Italy there are "not civil servants at the service of the public, but the public at the service of civil servants" (Sylos Labini 1974: 48). Nowhere does this observation find more validation than in southern cities such as Palermo, where the all important public sector has been controlled since World War II by one party, the Christian Democrats (cf. Chubb 1982; Crisantino 1990). Not all bourgeois Palermitans work in the public sector and not all civil servants are implicated in clientelism--although the almost unbelievable mismanagement of the city would lead a cynic to assume so. The political-economic environment, however, means that opportunity often depends on possessing networks, friends, and friends of friends in strategic positions. As Palermitans say with regard to the power of "friendship" to move bureaucracy, "nothing works and yet everything is possible."

While the bourgeoisie accounts for half of formal employment in Palermo, the poor make up a large but unquantifiable proportion of all employees (undocumented as well as documented), and very large proportion of the urban population. This population is often referred to as the **sottoproletariato** ("underproletariat") to distinguish it from a traditionally defined industrial working class (which is numerically insignificant in Palermo).

Sottoproletariato has a somewhat broader meaning in southern Italy than lumpen proletariat does in countries with strong working class traditions. Chubb (1982: 49) uses it to designate "almost everyone who is neither a landowner, a professional, or a member of the bureaucratic and commercial middle classes." This broad definition is consistent with Guarrasi's (1978) notion of "the marginal condition," which groups together the three strata of proletariat, the lowest levels of the petite bourgeoisie, and paupers who are all characterized by low and discontinuous income. Guarrasi uses the inclusive term marginal, rather than the contrasting ones of proletariat/lumpen proletariat, to underline the importance of unstable employment in capitalist labor markets, particularly in Palermo where many small, traditional, non-unionized firms rely on flexible labor inputs. I shall use the less judgmental "working people" to refer to those in the marginal condition and the **sottoproletariato**.

The small and discontinuous income characteristic of the marginal condition is linked to unstable work in a variety of occupations. The fluidity of survival strategies adopted by the poor is captured in the phases **mille mestieri** ("thousand trades") and **l'arte di arrangiarsi** ("the art of getting by"). The temporary nature of employment, the variety of occupations, and the often undocumented status of informal sector and illegal activities make any understanding of marginal work

impressionistic. The range of activities is bewildering and includes, among others, services, petty commerce, manufacturing in small shops and at home, construction, scavenging scrap metal and cardboard, and illegal activity such as theft and the sale of contraband goods. In the course of a year a male head of household might move from construction to woodworking to a city-sponsored training program (**cantiere**) to selling clothes at weekly markets. A poorer man might engage in unlicensed street vending of fruits and vegetables, scrap scavenging, and perhaps try his hand as an **ariffatore**, running a neighborhood lottery. Their wives might work part-time as domestics or cleaning offices. Child labor also plays an important role in the survival strategies of the very poor; it is not uncommon for many children to fail to complete the obligatory educational minimum of the eighth grade (**terza media**) because their families depend on their income.

The major classes of Palermitans, the bourgeoisie and working people, differ in terms of residence as well as by size and stability of income. The bourgeoisie concentrate in modern apartment blocks built in the 1960s and 1970s, sprawling northward from the old city (**centro storico**) into the lush coastal plain, the Conca d'oro, that surrounds Palermo. The **alta borghesia** occupy the larger and more luxurious apartments, and often maintain summer villas in Mondello, the exclusive seaside resort near Palermo. Working people historically resided in the dilapidated

centro storico and Borgo; since the mid-1960s, many have been transferred, or have moved illegally to public housing blocks on the periphery, Borgo Nuovo, CEP (Centro di Edilizia Programmata), and ZEN (Zona Espansione Nord), which together house more than 50,000 people. Conditions in the projects are terrible: crime and drug use are high, basic services were absent for years, and transportation to the city is poor.

The classes are also distinguished by differences in culture. The bourgeoisie have relatively high levels of what Pierre Bourdieu (1984) calls "cultural capital," that is, those practices transmitted through education and social position which, along with "economic capital," allow for the attainment and reproduction of class position. These Palermitans have relatively high levels of education, speak Italian, possess valuable networks of "friends," and enjoy high consumption standards. Within the bourgeoisie there is considerable range of cultural capital. Members of the **alta borghesia** command the most prestigious cultural knowledges and enjoy close relationships with powerful associates and family. Working people, in contrast, lack this capital. They have little education, speak dialect more than Italian, and are generally excluded from the consumption patterns and security that characterize mainstream Italian society. The economic subordination and residential segregation of working Palermitans do not engender an integrated culture or a class consciousness,

but rather a contradictory and fragmented culture.

Guarrasi concludes of Borgo, a poor Palermo neighborhood:

On the cultural level, the marginal population expresses a conflict in values and behavior which is determined by the subjective refusal to accept a marginal position in society, and by the objective impossibility of identifying consistently with cultural models produced by other strata or social classes. The tensions and conflicts linked to the marginal condition are thus an effect of unstable income and unstable employment, but also of the position of the marginal population within the system of social classes. [Guarrasi 1978: 173]

According to Jane and Peter Schneider (nd), changes in the 1980s undermined the tenuous security of both classes. The working poor were especially hard hit by declining construction activity. The prosecution by the Italian state of hundreds of reputed mafiosi in the so-called **maxi-processo** blocked the laundering of drug money in construction and real estate. Attempts by Leoluca Orlando, the reform-minded mayor of Palermo (1985-1990), to sever relations between City Hall and disreputable contractors also dampened construction activity. At the same time the bourgeoisie faced increasing unemployment as the postwar growth of the public sector stopped. With the declining value of their cultural capital, particularly the education of their children, they too faced a "crisis of social reproduction."

4. Modernization Without Development

In her review of the Palermo economy, Judith Chubb (1982) remarks that in many ways Palermo resembles a Third World city. Like a Third World city, Palermo draws more immigrants from its hinterland than it can absorb in a weak economy heavily weighted to the tertiary sector; as a result, there is a high incidence of underemployment and informal activity. The dominant tertiary sector is not integrated with a productive industrial base, as in for example a northern Italian city, but feeds off public sector employment; and most small and traditional manufacturing firms utilize the reserve army of labor constituted by the marginal population to compete against imported goods produced by larger firms. The situation in Palermo, and in the South of Italy generally, in fact recalls the underdevelopment and dependency normally associated with the Third World. Like semi-peripheral areas in what Immanuel Wallerstein calls the capitalist "world-system," southern Italy typically exports raw materials and human labor to core areas from which it in turn imports finished products; this structure of unequal exchange reproduces the dominance of the core over the semi-periphery and periphery (Wallerstein 1974).

The Schneiders have argued that contemporary Sicily exemplifies the process of "modernization without development" (Schneider and Schneider 1976; see also Schneider, Schneider and Hansen 1972). They contrast these

two types of change in this way:

[W]hereas both modernization and development imply change, development alters a society's relationship to the world-system of which it is a part and as a result enhances its ability to cope with that system. Modernization, by contrast, perpetuates a relationship of inequality and exploitation between a dependent area and its metropolitan core. Changes are the consequence not of a self-initiated ordering of priorities but of diffusion from the core. Even so, the process of modernization can lead to substantial increases in employment opportunities and in the standard of living--often more quickly and dramatically than can development. [Schneider and Schneider 1976: 203-204]

In the postwar period, the material conditions of Sicilian life have indeed improved dramatically. Per capita income has risen. A construction boom has replaced small, poorly-equipped housing with larger and newer housing stock furnished with indoor plumbing and appointed with numerous appliances. Motor vehicles have replaced animal transportation. The growth of the industrial and tertiary sectors have made agricultural employment less and less common and have drawn on an increasingly educated workforce. Rapid urbanization has further transformed this previously rural society. Improved transportation and communication networks have linked areas within Sicily and between it and the rest of Italy. The expanded presence of the state, higher standards of education, and mass cultural forces such as television have done much to Italianize Sicilian life.

Yet these unprecedented improvements in living

standards have not altered Sicily's fundamental dependence within the world-system and within Italy itself. As the Schneiders point out, the state investments and emigrant remittances which have financed Sicilian modernization are unstable and external sources of income. The Cassa per il Mezzogiorno, the development fund for the South that has poured billions of dollars into the South since its establishment in 1950, is legislated as a temporary measure. Capital intensive investment in industry in the 1960s and 1970s, like more recent investments in tourism, has failed to produce significant job opportunities. Emigration, which had provided employment opportunities for Sicilians from the end of the 19th century, drained the island of a sizable number of working-age men. Emigration ceased to be a viable option by the mid-1970s but many Sicilians remain abroad and in the North of Italy. Fragmentation of resources within agriculture and other sectors within Sicily continue to hamstring the development of indigenous productive capacities. This characteristic dependency is reflected in patterns of regional development within Italy: despite impressive modernization, the South/North gap continues to widen.

Elites have played a key role in reproducing Sicilian dependency. The Schneiders describe how the rural entrepreneurs, who usurped power from the landed aristocracy as Sicily passed from the status of a possession to being a part of unified Italy in the late

19th century, reinforced Sicilian dependency.

Entrepreneurs, particularly in the latifundia areas of western Sicily, utilized their key position in the rural economy to consolidate their power vis-a-vis the northern Italian bourgeoisie who controlled the new state. Best represented by a form of organization which came to be known as the mafia, these entrepreneurs utilized intimidation and violence, elaborated local cultural codes into an ideology justifying their power (i.e., *omertà*), and received protection from complicit authorities.

The role of the mafia as an elite had important consequences for economic and political organization in Sicily (Blok 1974; Schneider and Schneider 1976, 1992). Like the landed aristocracy before them, the mafia saw its interests rooted in the continuation of an export-oriented system centered on the production of wheat and animal products, manned by a land-poor peasantry. The consequent underdevelopment of agriculture and the brutal repression of the peasantry underwrote dependency to external markets and provoked mass emigration. At the same time, the variable but always significant influence of the mafia over representatives of the young Italian state impeded the implementation of state administration. The prominence of mafia also reinforced interrelated political and organizational forms common to areas peripheral to capitalist development, such as non-corporate groups, patronage, and the relative importance of personalized

networks over capital. In the postwar period, the mafia increasingly relocated its activities to the growing coastal cities. Control of increasing public investment and administration constituted an attractive urban power base just as the traditional one in the countryside was being eroded by land reform and declining profits. Particularly after the fall of the French Connection in the 1970s, these cities also became conduits for an international drug trade which was facilitated by far-flung mafia networks. Like emigration remittances, these new sources of illicit income have purchased modernization but have not altered Sicily's fundamental dependency.

5. Patronage in Palermo

The exercise of political power in postwar Palermo has been characterized by an alarming incidence of patronage in the context of the hegemony of the Christian Democratic party (DC), and by the collusion of the political elite and the mafia. Politicians and mafia figures are by no means coterminous, nor do their interests always coincide, but the involvement of organized crime in the city administration (and economy) is beyond dispute, even if it is rarely open to conclusive documentation by virtue of its illicit and powerful nature. For the populace, bad government is palpable, distressingly familiar and takes the form of generally poor and selectively provided services; a bloated, inefficient, and corrupt bureaucracy;

a deteriorating historic center; unregulated urbanization; and inadequate infrastructure, chronic water shortages, and nightmarish traffic. Sicilian scholars have called Palermo **la città spugna** ("the sponge city") to stress the capacity of the city to absorb immense amounts of public spending without leaving a discernable effect on its environment (Crisantino 1990).

The Christian Democratic Party consolidated its power soon after World War II and by the mid-1950s was:

...to exert an unchallenged mastery--without any effective control from within the DC, from other political parties, or from the legal organs of control over local government--not only over the party apparatus but over all major centers of political, administrative, and economic power in the city...In effect, the entire public sphere was transformed into a powerful political machine for the advancement of personal and party fortunes. [Chubb 1982: 70]

The primacy of the DC in Palermo mirrored the ascendancy of the party throughout the South in the same period. A strong southern power base has in fact done much to maintain the party's dominance in Italian politics. The DC, like other Italian parties, is composed of competing **correnti** ("factions") in which local powerholders are linked to national leaders for whom they provide votes and from whom they receive protection from legal scrutiny and access to a range of public monies and programs. In Palermo, the take-over of City Hall and thence the rest of the public sector was engineered by Giovanni Gioia and Salvo Lima, known as **fanfaniani** for their allegiance to

Amintore Fanfani, then national head of the DC and architect of the successful reorganization of the party in the mid-1950s.

6. Patronage in Action: The Building of New Palermo

The politics of urban expansion in Palermo provide an excellent example not only of how the Christian Democrats transformed City Hall into a patronage apparatus, but of the collaboration between political elites and mafia. Palermo, like other southern cities, experienced an unprecedented construction boom after World War II, as rural populations settled in cities or moved through them on their way to northern Italy and abroad. From 1951 to 1961, the population of Palermo increased almost 20%, from 490,692 to 587,985, and by 1971 it had reached 642,814 (ISTAT 1951, 1961, 1971). During the late 1950s and 1960s, "New Palermo" (**Palermo Nuova**) surged northward from its historic center, cementing over the citrus groves and farms of the Conca d'Oro. In this period, the construction industry set the pace of the urban economy and local government, in its regulatory capacity, oversaw construction.

Chubb has described how the **fanfaniani**, particularly Lima and Vito Ciancimino, directed the frenzy of speculation and unregulated construction that characterized urban expansion. Through manipulation of zoning instruments such as the general city plan (Piano Regolatore

Generale), building permits, contracts for public construction, and credit institutions, the DC elite secured enduring power over the city, as well as fortunes for its own members and its associates in real estate speculation and construction. According to Chubb, what distinguishes urban expansion in Palermo is not collusion between politicians and contractors, which was common enough in Italy during this period of intense urbanization, but rather how the existing criminal structure of the mafia inserted itself into this process. Given the hegemonic power of the DC in Palermo, which extends over virtually the entire public sector including regulatory bodies, proof of this collusion is hard to produce--or, better, few people were even brought to trial despite flagrant and systematic favoritism and illegalities. Yet, as Chubb discusses so thoroughly, the very form of urban expansion in Palermo illustrates the corruption of the DC and mafia power. Building permits, for example, were awarded on an extremely selective basis; a 1964 report found that 80% of the permits issued in 1957-1963 were received by only five people, two of whom were obvious fronts for mafiosi. Variances granted for violations of the Piano Regolatore were issued to prominent DC politicians, their supporters, and known mafiosi. Large developers disregarded the minor restrictions of the Piano Regolatore with impunity. Contracts were routinely awarded to firms of suspicious qualifications or pedigree at excessive prices. Public

housing blocks were situated on the northern periphery of the city so as to increase the value of intermediate land through the publicly financed building of infrastructures which served them. Rival mafia **cosche** ("families") warred throughout the period for prizes in real estate and construction.

Out of the logic of speculation grew the chaotic cityscape that is New Palermo. Countless violations of restrictions on building height and the unauthorized conversion of many public spaces to private property resulted in very high population densities, poor services, inadequate infrastructures, and undescrivable traffic jams. Pedestrian spaces, like sidewalks, are often encumbered by parked cars. The endemic shortage of school buildings in Palermo is emblematic of the speculative process as a whole. Chubb (1982: 137) attributes this shortage to two factors: 1) the corrupt implementation of the Piano Regolatore which permitted the conversion to private property of spaces designated for public services; and 2) a marked preference on the part of city officials for renting school space from private parties instead of overseeing the building of schools. As a result, funds from the national and regional governments, earmarked for school construction, go unspent while large amounts are channeled to owners of rented school buildings.

At the same time that the city administration aided and abetted the speculative building of New Palermo, it

allowed the **centro storico** to wither from neglect. The historic center of the city is the area that traditionally contained administrative buildings and the palaces of the landed aristocracy, set alongside the shops of artisans and the miserable hovels of the poor. The **centro storico** makes up a more or less area divided by the exhaust-blackened axes of Via Maqueda and Corso Vittorio Emanuele into four **mandamenti** or administrative zones whose corners meet at Quattro Canti, the heart of historic Palermo. This baroque space, formed by three-storey sculptures on the concave surfaces of each of the corner buildings, entreat one to dwell on the allegory of the four seasons.

But rather than present the image of life eternal, the **centro storico** brings to mind the image of life persisting amid decay. Allied bombing during World War II severely damaged the area, scattering the few remaining nobles to the new city. Despite massive financial commitments from national and regional governments as well as the European Community, plans for rebuilding the area have stalled for decades. As the construction boom shifted attention to urban expansion, the erosive agents of time and neglect, not to mention an earthquake in 1968, further destroyed the center. The resulting cityscape is a dank maze of alleys and narrow streets giving onto an unreal succession of crumbling palaces, hovels, historic churches, artisans' shops, empty spaces and rubble, tiny stores, and the occasional modern apartment building. Some narrow streets

are made darker still by the beams which span them, bracing weak facades which might otherwise crumble. In contrast to the deterioration of the interior of the center, the main streets retain much of their former activity. They are the location of many government and other offices, historical monuments, and myriad shops, mostly selling low and medium priced apparel.

The population of the center decreased over time and became increasingly marginalized in the face of systematic neglect of the city administration (Crisantino 1990; Quilici 1980). The remaining poor or marginal population was left to inhabit scarce and dilapidated housing, where they encountered unsanitary conditions, almost non-existent services, and alarming rates of disease, compounded by endemic unemployment, illiteracy, and malnutrition. In these circumstances many left or were transferred from the center. The population of the center fell from 125,271 in 1951 to 53,022 in 1971 to an estimated 40,000 in 1979, representing a drop in the center's proportion of the city population from 36% to 8% to 6% (Quilici 1980: 31, 107-108). This depopulation took two principal forms: the poor majority who were either transferred or moved without permission to the public housing blocks on the extreme periphery of Palermo; and the petite bourgeois minority who could afford to buy or rent private housing in the newly built areas closer to the old center. As dramatic as these figures are, they underestimate the magnitude of the

depopulation of the **centro storico**. The population of the center would have been much smaller still were it not for the thousands of poor rural migrants who settled there temporarily and permanently, especially during the construction boom when jobs were relatively plentiful.

Today the **centro storico** continues to testify to decades of neglect by a DC administration and to economic marginality. While the unbelievable misery described in the 1950s by activist Danilo Dolci (1959) is no longer the norm, conditions of the center remain scandalously poor. Life in these **quartieri popolari** is characterized by bad housing, disease, unemployment, child labor, informal "refuge" activities, failing services, low educational attainment, and petty crime (e.g., Centro Sociale San Francesco Saverio 1990). Yet the boisterous outdoor life, street-side craft activity, and shops, as well as the three great, ancient open-air markets of Capo, Vucciria, and Ballarò, offset to some extent the degradation and depopulation in the core areas of the **centro storico**. The markets in particular, with their bewildering variety and volume, hawkers' cries and bustling crowds, animate the center and lend it a characteristic theatrical air. They continue to attract shoppers from outside as well as inside the area.

There are financial motives behind the neglect of the old city by successive Christian Democratic regimes--in addition to the predictable disregard for the poor in a

clientelistic system that distributes rights and social services as though they were favors and goods to be sold. In the view of Chubb and many observers in Palermo, inattention to the historic center can be seen, along with the relocation of poor to peripheral developments, as a strategy to clear the way for the eventual speculative development of the old city. So far, however, the massive funds for **risanamento** ("reclamation") have for the most part gone untapped, although reconstruction plans have been a topic of debate since the war (see e.g., Quilici 1980). The inability of city officials to utilize these funds, which represent at the very least a significant patronage resource, is telling, particularly from the mid-1970s when the private market for new housing was saturated. Chubb (1982: 156) attributes this failure to the consequences of patronage politics. On one hand, decades of favoritism in hiring means that the city lacks the qualified staff necessary for such a large project. On the other hand, recent power struggles within the DC have impeded the development of a plan that would satisfy competing interests.

7. Patronage, Dependency, and Political Participation

The Christian Democratic party has given rise to a reform wing, many of whose leaders have participated in the reformist, anti-corruption, "clean hands" movement that is just now transforming the Italian state. Reform-minded DC

leaders include not a few Sicilians. Yet the party as a whole has quite a black reputation in Sicily. This is because it was primarily responsible for Sicily and Palermo's postwar modernization without development. The profound disregard of the DC elite for the common good has fostered the growth of an extensive patronage apparatus, scandalously low standards of basic and social services, the marginalization of a great proportion of the city's inhabitants, and chaotic urban expansion. It has, moreover, reinforced dependency on unstable sources of income, such as disability pensions (disproportionately granted to Southerners), state funded development projects, and emigrant remittances. Like the landed aristocracy and rural mafia before it, and like the urban mafia now associated with it, the power of the DC elite has rested on its ability to control both the opportunity structure within Sicily and the relation of Sicily to national government and markets. It does this through patronage. As Caroline White (1980) has argued in her study of southern Italian politics, patronage constitutes a form of class relations where the power of patrons rests on their ability to control and restrict the distribution of vital resources. Economic underdevelopment, in this context, is key to the patronage system because it increases the importance of the public sector that is its power base; likewise, bureaucratic inefficiency guarantees the importance of mediation (Chubb 1982). The vested interest

of the DC in southern Italian dependency is one powerful reason why billions of dollars in state investment in the South have failed to establish significant economic growth. In Palermo, the inability or unwillingness of the DC to implement the rebuilding of the center exemplifies the party's profound commitment to scarcity.

A fundamental consequence of the patronage system is the virtual absence of popular participation in politics. As a mass-based party in a modern democracy, the DC of course relies on numerical support in the form of votes. Votes, however, express not support for party ideology but dependency on the party's control of the system. The essence of this complicated process is the exchange of votes for real or potential favors, directed by an extensive network of small bosses in poor areas and maintained through clientelistic relations (usually at work) among the bourgeoisie. The experiences of two important recent popular political movements, the housing struggle and antimafia movement, illustrate the enduring power of patronage in Palermo.

The housing struggle (*il movimento di lotta per la casa*) of 1975-6 was perhaps the most significant recent political mobilization of the city's poor (Chubb 1982; Guarrasi 1978). Through illegal occupation of unassigned public housing, mass demonstrations, and a general strike the movement brought down a Center-Right administration controlled by the *fanfaniani* and forced the assignment of

over 300 units of public housing. But this movement, which galvanized the anger of the poor over terrible housing conditions (particularly in the center), died out quickly without having altered poor people's political impotence and disorganization. One cause of this failure was the conflict within the leadership between leftist youth groups on the one hand and on the other the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS)² and allied trade and tenants' unions. The PDS, which dominated the latter group, was preoccupied with joining the administration and with channeling the protest of the poor into its institutional structure. As an influential force on the special commission established by the city to deal with the protest, it also faced the difficult task of overseeing the assignment of hundreds of apartments when tens of thousands were needed. Attempts to requisition private apartments, for which funding was available, were impeded by real estate and construction interests, and debate on the broader question of future **risanamento** failed to hold the attention of those desperately in need of safe housing. In the context of divisions in leadership of the movement and the lack of results, the DC skillfully used clientelistic promises in the June 1976 campaign for regional and parliamentary elections to defuse protest.

The ongoing antimafia movement in Palermo, described by the Schneiders (nd), differs from the housing movement

2. Formerly the Italian Communist Party (PCI).

in terms of its composition, goals, and methods. Although it too lost momentum after initial victories, the movement has again picked up speed since the summer of 1992, as the Italian state has aggressively combatted the mafia in response to the murders of anti-mafia prosecutors Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino. Participants in the anti-mafia movement come mostly from Palermo's intelligentsia, and are young, university educated professionals. In contrast to past antimafia struggles, this movement is composed of members from the Left and the Church, traditionally opposed groups. The movement consists of the Coordinamento Antimafia, an umbrella organization founded in 1986, reform-minded politicians from the DC and opposition parties, and members of recently founded social centers working among the poor. It was formed in response to the bloody mafia wars of the early 1980s and a related series of murders of state officials. The movement criticizes not only the mafia's reign of terror but the patronage system, epitomized by the DC machine but symptomatic of Sicilian society as a whole and indeed the clientelistic Italian political system. Leaders speak of the need for a clean "break" from the current system of "affiliation" to party and patron, to be replaced by the "transparency" of democracy and the rule of law. This movement has forcefully brought its concerns to public attention through political mobilization and analyzes the mafia and the political system (e.g., Santino 1989).

The movement enjoyed much power and notoriety in the "Palermo Springtime" (1986-1987), during the early years of the Orlando administration. A sworn opponent of the **fanfaniani**, Orlando supported Coordinamento events. His administration, which included members of parties of the Left and non-traditional parties such as the Jesuit sponsored Città per l'Uomo (City for Man) and the Verdi (Greens), sought to eliminate mafia links to the city by, for example, "breaking" with contractors with ties to reputed mafiosi. Notwithstanding this unprecedented attack on patronage, by 1988 the movement found itself increasingly stymied by its opponents who had mounted a rearguard action within City Hall, and by an ideological backlash which portrayed members of the movement as careerists and opponents of Sicilian culture. At the same time the rigidity of the Coordinamento's attack on clientelism fostered a split within the movement. The Coordinamento, for example, criticized the three major trade unions, which had dealings with construction companies associated with organized crime from the 1970s, while the leadership of the social centers were hesitant to attack the unions that controlled an important source of employment for their communities. The movement lost its claim on City Hall in the aftermath of the 1990 elections when Orlando, who had headed the Christian Democratic list, was forced to resign by opposing factions in his party. Orlando left Palermo to form a national party, **La Rete** (the

network), devoted to reforming the Italian political system.

After languishing for a period, the anti-mafia movement has recaptured the imagination of many Sicilians who have been impressed with the state's crackdown on the mafia. As the "clean hands" reform movement moves southward from Milan [in early 1993], it may well link up with the state's campaign against the mafia. In Palermo, the anti-mafia movement, backed by unprecedented support from the state, may soon create a second and more enduring "Palermo Spring."

The hold of the DC and its associates on the sources of power in Palermo, as in the South in general, has, until very recently, appeared so absolute as to make reform all but impossible. As Chubb and White have stressed, patronage in southern Italy, far from being a transitional form of mediation between state and citizen and destined to dissolve in the wake of economic development, is rather an active force in the reproduction of dependency and scarcity. Patronage, through its emphasis on loose coalitions and dyadic ties, promotes the possibility of individual gain at the price of collective degradation--exemplified by urban expansion in Palermo. By the same token it thwarts the development of broad-based political action for reform. As the Schneiders write of the Coordinamento's strident call for a break with clientelism, "Innocent and morally compelling on the surface, this

assault threatened the schools, the professions, the public sector jobs and construction variances that constitute the "resource bundles" of all the unpropertied classes in Palermo--including the intelligentsia" (Schneider and Schneider nd: 18). Most Palermitans are thus enmeshed in and dependent on patronage. Christian Democratic power in Palermo, while hegemonic, especially from the mid-1950s to mid-1970s, is not absolute or immutable, as is indicated by the will to reform in Palermo and the current crisis the party finds itself in at the national level. Only now does it appear that the patronage system and the linkage between mafia and politics will loosen their hold over economics and politics in Palermo, assuming the continuation of the present reform.

8. Immigrants in Palermo

This final section locates immigrants in the urban political economy. It focuses on the place of foreign workers in the labor market, and discusses the issue of competition between foreign and local poor, as well as the potential for political mobilization against immigrants. Immigration to Palermo, as was discussed in Chapter II (section 6), began in the late 1960s, as women from Cape Verde, Mauritius, and the Philippines arrived to work as domestic servants. By 1990, the time of this study, there were approximately 15,000 to 30,000 immigrants in the city, of which the majority came from Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal,

Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Cape Verde, Mauritius, and Ghana. Immigrants have generally inserted themselves at the bottom of Palermo's highly differentiated housing and labor markets.

The majority of foreigners live in the **centro storico**, often in the nearly uninhabitable or condemned apartments left vacant by the recent exodus from the old center. These dwellings often lack basic amenities such as running water, heating, and efficient roofs. As Vincenzo Guarrasi notes, the accommodation of foreigners in the dilapidated center represents the culmination of a logic of degradation in which landlords, retaining title in hope of the future **risanamento** project, do not maintain the buildings they rent out to a succession of marginal or transient populations such as the local poor, the elderly, university students, and now immigrants (Vincenzo Guarrasi, personal communication). Immigrants also find housing in working-class areas outside the old center, such as Borgo and Zisa, where housing conditions are better. Immigrants pay exaggerated rents in all neighborhoods, as Sicilians admit and immigrants complain.

Although a few immigrants work in construction and manufacturing, most work in the tertiary sector, as domestic servants, in low-level services, and as self-employed street vendors. In sum, they work the hardest and lowest-paying jobs in the urban economy. Consonant with high levels of informal economic activity among the working

population as a whole, immigrant work is typically undocumented (in the case of employees) and unlicensed (in the case of the self-employed). Within this general context of economic subordination, however, there are important differences in job type and security.

Immigrant labor market participation varies significantly by national origin. Predominantly female immigrants from Asia and West Africa work almost to a woman as domestics (colf) for the bourgeoisie in New Palermo. Many early immigrants found jobs through missionaries active in their countries, such as the Salesians, while others found jobs through employment agencies or employers themselves. This demand was created by the declining availability of the poor local women who had traditionally staffed the homes of the rich. Crushing poverty had forced many poor women in the past to seek domestic work even though they regarded it shameful, particularly the position of the live-in maid whose honor and virginity were considered to be compromised by such proximity to her employer. From the late 1960s, increasing state supports and greater employment opportunities often related to the urban expansion enabled most women in the **centro storico** to reject domestic work, at least on a full-time basis. Today, foreign women occupy virtually all the full-time positions in the sector, both live-in and live-out. Those who lack a full-time job tend to receive lower wages; they patch together a living with a combination of temporary,

part-time positions. Those Sicilian women who still work in the domestic sector, in contrast, work only on an occasional or part-time basis to supplement family income, as noted above.

Two church-related associations now frequently serve as placement centers for foreign and local domestic workers, as well as providing such services as legal assistance and job training. The Palermo branch of the national Associazione Professionale delle Collaboratrice Familiari (API-COLF), associated with the Salesian order, processes about one thousand requests for employees yearly. The smaller Centro La Speranza/ACLI-COLF is a division of the national Associazione Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani (ACLI), a national Christian workers' association. Both associations report that job offers exceed applicants. They also note a change in the job conditions for foreigners. In the past foreign women, particularly those working as live-in maids, were often underpaid and exploited by employers who held their undocumented status against them. Today most of these workers possess residence and work permits and receive the going pay rate, which as in most Italian cities is above the national minimum standard and which varies by skill. A loose ranking of domestic workers exists wherein prestige and skill are translated into higher wages, increased job security, and benefits. Filipinos, here as elsewhere in Italy and Europe, occupy the most advantageous position.

They are followed by Cape Verdians, Mauritians, Sri Lankans (both men and women), and finally Ghanians.

While most Asian and some African women work as domestics in the luxury high-rises of New Palermo, most male immigrants work in the poor neighborhoods of the **centro storico** and elsewhere in which they live. In the center, North Africans (mostly male) and West Africans, like the poorest Sicilians there, patch together a livelihood out of various temporary and undocumented (or "black") work. The two populations, however, occupy different niches in Palermo's Byzantine labor market. Immigrants jobs are more stigmatized, more often temporary, and pay less. Immigrants work for as little as 3000-4000 lire per hour (\$2.50 to \$3.30 at the 1990 exchange rate of about 1200 lire per \$1.00), while locals start at 6000 lire per hour. And while both groups lack the security and benefits "black" work entails, Sicilians can make a good wage, especially as street and market vendors. Most important, perhaps, state supports and family networks enable most working Palermitans to concede to immigrants **i lavori umili** ("humble jobs") such as washing stairs in apartment buildings or washing dishes in restaurants. The more foreigners assume such positions, the more stigmatized they become for Sicilians to take. In the end, immigrants are hired not only because they are cheaper, which at times they may not be, but because they are more reliable and willing.

Finally, there are those male immigrants who, as **vu cumprà**, have created an economic niche for themselves as itinerant street vendors of Africana and low-priced seasonal items. These men come from Morocco, Senegal, and occasionally from Tunisia. They move across the city and throughout the country in loose (North Africans) or tight-knit (Senegalese) groups (on immigrant group organization see Fortunato and Methnani 1990; Khouma 1990). In Palermo, they, along with the North Africans who brave traffic in the hope of washing car windshields at the rare Palermo stop light, form the most visible part of the immigrant population. Like the "mosquitos" who wash windshields, the **vu cumprà** are alternately pitied for their misery and scorned as pests. Merchants in particular object to these vendors spreading their wares in front of their stores, but there is so far no evidence of an organized or coordinated protest.

Within this context of unstable employment in the bottom half of the urban labor market, there is a kind of split in which jobs held by local poor and immigrants differ by occupation, status, and wage. Filipino and some other female domestics are exceptions to this rule because they receive relatively good pay and benefits--a fact unknown to most poor Palermitans, however. As Chapter IV discusses in detail, working-class evaluations of immigrant workers are ambivalent, recognizing the economic subordination of immigrants but at the same time

exaggerating immigrant competition.

Finally, the tendency of the patronage system to stifle popular political mobilization has important consequences for the political reception of immigrants, as the following chapters explore. With the exception of the Orlando administration, official politics rarely involves the presentation of issues to the public or encourages debate. In such circumstances politicians have little to gain from discussion of issues like immigration and racism, which touch only the weakest of constituents. These issues are further marginalized by the predictable absence of action with regard to immigrants. In the North of Italy, by contrast, active government support for local-level programs has been important in politicizing immigration and related issues. The political climate of Palermo also limits the potential for the anti-immigrant mobilization of the poor, who are more vulnerable than others to the actual or potential competition of immigrants. The politicization of their fears, if they have any, is made unlikely by their meager resources and lack of political experience and power. In the absence of government action, the call of unions, churches, and associations for the regulation and integration of immigrants has been heard mostly by the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie of New Palermo. These groups also are most receptive to ideas about Sicilian tolerance and the duty of former emigrants to receive current immigrants. The repression of political expression

characteristic of patronage, however, is as determinant as the rhetoric and reality of local tolerance with regard to the absence of anti-immigrant politics in Palermo.

Chapter IV

When the Bottom Looks Down: Working-Class Views of Immigrants in Palermo¹

In their classic *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* (1985), Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack observed that, of all groups, European working classes revealed the most hostility and racism against foreign workers. According to them, indigenous workers resented immigrants as unwanted competitors for jobs, housing, and services as politicians fueled and legitimated these fears. Castles and Kosack also attributed working-class racism to the authoritarian socialization of workers in capitalist society. Drawing on Frankfurt School analyses of Nazism, they suggested that the tension between worker status and bourgeois ideology made working people prone to intolerance. Peter Worsley (1976) has criticized the conflation of organized racism in Nazi Germany with the exploitation and abuse through neglect of foreign workers in contemporary Europe. He applauds Castles and Kosack, however, for improving on their theory in their actual analysis, in which they present as mutually determining the "subjective" and "objective" splits between foreign and domestic workers. Subjective splits such as the indifference or hostility of European workers towards immigrants, for example, plays off of objective differences in pay and security.

1. I thank Gerald Sider for the title.

Later observers have also reported working-class apathy and racism against foreign workers. The few scholars who have taken up the problem have, like Castles and Kosack, grappled with the relation of the material and ideological differences between domestic and foreign workers. In their study of a London neighborhood, Annie Phizacklea and Robert Miles (1979, 1980) have argued that working-class racism derives not so much from adherence to ideologies of racial inequality as from the daily experience of competing with immigrants for jobs and housing. For these workers the "coloureds" become a local and concrete explanation for the general problems of industrial decline and unemployment. Economic competition as such does not directly generate hostility, however. For instance, workers in rich areas of Holland and California similarly see immigrants as threatening (Van Dijk 1987), because the presence of foreign workers underlines for native workers their own fundamental insecurity under capitalism. Anti-immigrant sentiment can become virulent when economic insecurity becomes entwined with racist and nationalist ideologies. Frank Reeves (1983), for example, suggests that British working-class racism be seen in terms of status competition in the context of class insecurity and colonial ideology. British workers object to working and living alongside of, and therefore being compared to, immigrants from presumably inferior colonial populations. Along similar lines Etienne Balibar (1991d, 1991e) has

suggested that French working-class hostility to immigrants grows out of a confluence of declining living standards and job insecurity, the historical integration of immigrants in a segmented labor market, and racist and nationalist political ideologies. In both accounts, political movements are key to the politicization of race and immigration among workers.

This chapter examines the form, extent, and political potential of racism and other attitudes towards immigrants among working people in Palermo. Poverty and high unemployment in Palermo would seem to fulfill important conditions for working-class hostility if not racism against Africans and Asians. Working Palermitans do worry about competing for jobs with immigrants, whom they call "Turks," but rarely express racism or blame Palermo's problems on the unprecedented numbers of foreigners. Workers' views of immigrants are characteristically ambivalent, accepting them as fellow poor while denigrating them as threatening and undeserving of opportunity in Italy. During the period of my study, workers did not seek to express themselves politically on immigration, nor did any politician in the clientelistic political system show any inclination to organize the city's poor on the issue.

This chapter begins with an introduction to the two poor neighborhoods in which I conducted research. It then addresses the question of job competition between local and foreign workers. Next I consider the impact of class

experience and consciousness, as well as Sicilian regional identity, on workers' perceptions of and interactions with immigrants. It is through a close reading of working-class experience and self-understanding that I explain working Palermitans' ambivalent and contradictory appraisals of immigrants.

1. The Setting: "Popular" Neighborhoods New and Old

I conducted research on working-class interactions with and interpretations of immigrants in Albergheria and Zisa, two **quartieri popolari** ("popular" or poor neighborhoods) in Palermo. Albergheria, where I lived for most of 1990, lies in the heart of the **centro storico**, in the **mandamento** of Palazzo Reale. Like most neighborhoods in the old city, Albergheria is characterized by deplorable living conditions, high unemployment, and poverty. Since World War II, the quarter has been depopulated and has fallen into extreme disrepair. The occasional modern or well maintained apartment stands out against a background of abandoned buildings, rubble-strewn lots, dilapidated structures, and makeshift shacks. A study conducted in 1988-9 by a local social center, Centro Sociale San Francesco Saverio, found that 20% of a sample of 675 people lived in housing in danger of collapse, and another 40% occupied housing of very poor quality. The study also found that only 26% of adult men and 5.8% of adult women held steady jobs (CSSS 1990: 208-9). The resulting class

structure is one characterized by the "marginal condition" described in the last chapter. In another study, Vincenzo Guarrasi (1980: 78-9) found that of the quarter's population 26.4% could be classified as petite bourgeoisie, 8.2% as workers, 16.6% as marginalized proletarians, and 43% as paupers. The petite bourgeoisie and the steadily employed workers lived in modern public and private housing while the other groups lived in decayed and illegal housing.

The marginality of Albergheria is epitomized in the condition of children. The Social Center study found that 20% of the school-age children had dropped out of school and another 40% were behind. It also found an alarming incidence (93 cases) of homeless children, **ragazzi per la strada**, without education or employment (CSSS 1990: 263-269). Albergheria, then, is characterized by poverty and social disintegration. Guarrasi sees depopulation, lack of work, and decay responsible for the destruction of such traditional forms as artisanal and petty commercial work near home. There has been an erosion of neighborhood endogamy, dense social networks, cultural and linguistic forms, and religious institutions. Marginalization has increased local dependency on public and religious agencies in the context of government apathy, encouraging clientelistic mediation and impeding for local political mobilization.

I supplemented research in Albergheria with a

questionnaire survey in a school which I shall call "Garibaldi," located in Zisa, a working-class neighborhood which takes its name from the nearby twelfth-century summer palace constructed in the Arab style for Sicily's famous Norman kings. Built up during the construction boom of the 1960s and 1970s, Zisa is located near the western edge of the city. The buildings, though of recent construction, are drab and neglected. The emptiness of the wide and desolate streets distinguishes these neighborhoods from the trademark bustle and noise of the "popular" areas of the **centro storico**. Old and new working-class neighborhoods alike are characterized by social, economic, and political marginality (Crisantino 1990). In a questionnaire survey at Garibaldi (see below), for example, only 35% of the people in the sample held steady jobs, half of which were undocumented. Working Palermitans in this area, as in Albergheria, speak with cynical confidence that government and mafia collude to oppress them and exclude them from Italy's economic growth.

2. Research Population and Research Methods

I conducted the bulk of my research on working-class views of immigrants in Albergheria. There I settled with my family, thanks to the efforts of a local priest and social worker, and there I participated in neighborhood life, engaged in discussions, and observed Sicilian-immigrant interactions. Near the end of my stay I

conducted structured interviews with twelve male residents aged 20 to 65; occasionally their families participated as well. Each interview lasted about two hours--although one ran to eight--and covered the following topics: personal and family work history, assessments of local conditions and employment, and understandings of Sicilian emigration as well as recent African and Asian immigration. I then drew on these interviews to make a three-page questionnaire on the same topics, which I administered to four class-specific samples. These included: working-class Albergheria residents (15), students at Garibaldi in Zisa (57), working-class and petite bourgeois University of Palermo students (26), and (petite) bourgeois students at the elite high school "Ruggero II" (44). (I treat the latter two groups in Chapter V.)

The Zisa students, who ranged in age from 16-43, were participants in a nation-wide "150 Hours Course," a kind of equivalency program which confers an eighth-grade diploma. This diploma is the current legal minimum of educational attainment in Italy; it is also the minimum requirement for entry into the **concorsi** or "competitions" for public employment, one of the few avenues to job security for working people in southern Italy in the absence of a vigorous private sector. The students, who find themselves excluded from good jobs on the basis of their education, are keenly aware of the pressures operating at the bottom of the labor market, including immigrant employment.

3. The Dual Labor Market

Explanations of working-class racism posit resource competition in general, and job competition in particular, as basic to the process of racial stereotyping. I therefore begin my description of working Palermitans' interpretations of immigration with a survey of the labor market. In Albergheria there is a small population of steadily employed artisans, shopkeepers, and full-time employees. But for most, steady jobs and documented jobs with benefits are scarce, particularly with the decline in construction on which the poor have depended in the postwar period. As was discussed in Chapter II (section 3), in the absence of steady work many heads of households practice the *l'arte di arrangiarsi*, the art of getting by, taking a succession of usually undocumented jobs and attempts at self-employment in petty commerce, supplemented perhaps with paid job training at recently instituted city workshops (*cantieri*). Full-time employment for women is rarer still, though some work occasionally cleaning offices and houses. A man with the rare union job summed up working-class fears this way:

We live in fear, uncertainty, because work is so hard to find. Every morning we get up and make the sign of the cross to thank the Lord for another day. Today your wife puts something in the skillet for lunch, but you can't say that it'll be there tomorrow.

He went on to criticize the unfair, clientelistic

distribution of jobs:

Say I've got a university degree and enter a competition, but they give it to a guy with a second grade education as a favor. Where's all my and my family's sacrifices? At sea!

The situation of immigrants is more precarious still, as was described in Chapter III (section 8). Immigrant employment is strongly correlated with nationality. North African and West African men often work in bars and restaurants, unloading wares in the large markets such as Ballarò, and as street vendors (*vu cumprà*). Asian women (and some men) and West African women work as domestic servants in New Palermo, either on a full-time basis or holding several part-time jobs at once. Filipino, but also some Mauritian and Cape Verdian women, who are in demand for their skill and the prestige they lend employers, hold domestic positions that pay well and carry benefits. Filipinos owe their position to several factors, including the prestige they bring their employers as well-educated (many hold university degrees), exotic, and dependable servants, and their familiarity with Italian (the first Filipinos arrived in the early 1970s). And because they organized themselves in 1979 with the assistance of the Salesians, many Filipinos receive relatively high wages and benefits.

In general, however, jobs held by working Palermitans confer slightly more prestige and pay than jobs held by

immigrants. Immigrants receive the low-paying and humiliating jobs which Sicilians refuse. Also, because networks and patronage play such a large role in the acquisition of good jobs, as the quote above suggested, immigrants, who lack these ties, are not real competitors for them. Competition for jobs is therefore minimal; in effect, a kind of dual labor market has been created as immigrants occupy the jobs vacated by Palermo's poor.

A similar differential applies to housing. Apartments occupied by immigrants have often been abandoned or left by Sicilians who have moved or been transferred away from the **centro storico**. Their arrival, moreover, has not provoked a general rise in the old city rents. Immigrants and Sicilians do say that the latter overcharge the former for lodgings of the worst quality (cf. Crisantino 1992: 54). Importantly, even with the new immigration law, immigrants are not eligible for public housing which, as was seen in Chapter III (sections 6 and 7), is much needed but rarely delivered in Palermo. In the North, by contrast, immigrants experience great difficulties in obtaining housing due to high rents, the shortage of housing, and the reluctance of Italians to rent to them. As I suggest in Chapter VI (section 9), the housing problem has contributed to the image of immigration as a crisis in the North.

As regards services, the undocumented status of most immigrants prior to Law #39 in 1990 made them ineligible for most public benefits which, like public housing, are in

short supply and poorly administered in Palermo. Many immigrants have instead sought assistance at the Social and Medical Center for Immigrants at the Oratory Santa Chiara, which is discussed in Chapter VI. Other associations and institutions concerning themselves with immigration and race are also considered in that chapter. Santa Chiara is located in Ballarò, the neighborhood adjacent to Albergheria. The medical center, often referred to as the **poliambulatorio**, was established in 1988 on the initiative of a student and some of her faculty at the University of Palermo School of Medicine (Mansueto 1989). By 1990 its volunteer staff had treated over one thousand people. Members of the Salesian Order and volunteers also assist immigrants and local poor. They regularly open Santa Chiara up to immigrant associations and initiatives such as the Tamil school, established in 1990.

Sicilian residents of Albergheria are acutely conscious of the status divide between jobs "fit" for immigrants and those "fit" for them. My conversations in the **piazza** with unemployed and underemployed young men, for example, frequently turned to the difficulties of finding work. They stressed that as desperate as they were for work, they would never stoop to washing stairways in local residential buildings. Washing stairs represents for many the job of last resort, and apartment renters and owners alike in Albergheria prefer to hire out the task. According to these young men, their parents would sooner

support them for years than endure the shame of a son publicly humiliating both himself and them in this way.

A young man once told me how a Ghanaian had come to replace a Sicilian man from a nearby town as our building's stair cleaner. While the Sicilian relentlessly pursued higher fees in exchange for sloppy work, and eventually quit coming to work altogether, the African regularly washed the steps as clean as a plate. But what captivated the attention of my narrator was not the admirable work ethic of the immigrant--to take seriously such a task was actually laughable to him--but the tragedy of the Sicilian **poveretto** ("wretch") whose humiliation more than excused his poor performance.

Immigrants and working-class Sicilians' participation on the Palermo labor market, and the apportionment of services and housing, is in sum essentially non-competitive. There is a complicated dual labor market one side of which is occupied by nationals and the other by foreigners. Among the foreigners, participation varies by nationality. Many commentators have seen job competition as the cause of working-class anger over immigration, but this resentment can also feed off of the protectionism and hierarchy of dual labor markets. The division of workers among discrete and ranked labor market niches, the ensuing wage differentials, absence of collective experience, and jockeying for position through union agreements have been shown to fuel ethnic and racial categorization in

capitalist economies (see, e.g., Bonacich 1972, 1979). In Palermo, the late date of immigration and the near absence of working-class organization mean that the dual labor market, with its affect on the identity of immigrant workers, is still in formation. But as I shall show below, working-class understandings of the dual labor market are central to their views of immigrants.

4. Working-Class Experience and Class Consciousness: Local Understandings of the Political Economy

Discussion of working Palermitans' perceptions of self and others is grouped around four themes. Because I argue that workers' interpretations of immigrants hinge on their self-evaluations and class consciousness, I begin with a presentation of their notions of self-worth and their own perceptions of their place at the bottom of Sicilian and Italian society. Only after explaining their understanding of their situation will I turn to popular knowledge and categorizations of foreigners. I pay close attention here to race and racism, that is, to the extent to which these Palermitans view immigrants as biologically distinct groups, which are seen to possess natural and usually inferior or threatening qualities which justify fear and exclusionary action against them. I examine next working peoples' assessments of immigrants' participation in the labor market as potential competitors and employees. Because job competition is crucial to understanding

working-class interpretations of foreign workers, I then examine the extent to which the lack of competition between immigrants and Palermitans is recognized and denied. This discussion closes with an examination of working Palermitans' understandings of Sicilian emigration and current Third World immigration. In the course of this comparison, I present their views of the causes and characteristics of the two migrations, as well as their opinions for and against immigration.

This presentation will show that most working Palermitans in both my Albergheria and Zisa samples do not espouse a (racist) ideology in which immigrants, defined racially, serve to explain the Palermitans' own problems and to furnish grounds for fear or action against them. These Sicilians instead incorporate the immigrant presence into prior understandings about their own oppression by mafia, government, and employers. African (and Asian) neighbors, co-workers, and employers come in this way to represent both a threat to security and to a status of the most tenuous nature. This view also explains the continued animosity of Sicilians to the Italian state, which they understand to have aided and abetted immigration. These popular understandings are typically rooted in local knowledge and a fear of competition; they are inconsistent, ambivalent and stubbornly pessimistic. These views, as I will show in the next chapter, contrast with the sophisticated, universalistic, pro-immigration, and

explicitly antiracist views espoused by the bourgeoisie and the associations and institutions that work with immigrants.

Working people in Palermo see themselves as hounded by insecurity and humiliated by marginalization. They lay the blame for this on the collusion of politicians and mafia, and to a lesser extent on employers ever ready to exploit the surplus of workers over jobs. They both accept and reject at the same time their material and ideological powerlessness. Their obvious subordination--on the labor market, in politics, in cultural evaluations--proves to them, in a persistent way, their intrinsic demerits. The conclusion they read follows directly from both the logic of work under capitalist democracy and from the reality of the mafia. In the former logic, the citizen and employee are supposedly free and equal, and will succeed or fail on the basis of merit. In the second logic, the exercise of power generates a form of authority (but rarely legitimacy) in the absence of a strong state presence--an authority to which people acknowledge their subordination through obedience if not respect.

The precariousness of employment is the well-spring of discontent. "Underemployment is Palermo's biggest problem," two young men told me, in unison, and without exaggeration. The difficulty of finding and maintaining steady work, the loss of benefits entailed in "black work," the bouts of unemployment, *l'arte di arrangiarsi*--all this

dogs the working Palermitan, eats away at his or her self-image, and cultivates a sixth sense for locating work through networks and patrons. The myriad of survival strategies of *l'arte di arrangiarsi* activate diffuse neighborhood and familial alliances and inspire contempt towards a corrupt and failed system. The crushing poverty of the popular quarters of Palermo in the 1950s, described by Danilo Dolci (1959), the famous advocate of Sicily's poor in the 1950s and 1960s, has all but disappeared; nonetheless the fundamental insecurity of working-class life remains.

Those who find salaried employment are made vulnerable by the relentless operation of the first rule of market economics, the law of supply and demand. The most obvious way in which employers exploit the surplus of workers to jobs is through "black" or undocumented work. This relationship varies from one of mutual convenience--the employer saves the substantial payments to pension and other funds and the employee gains unreported income--to one of dominance in which the employer obtains cheap labor for usually unfulfilled promises of documentation and better pay. By way of example, employers might register the employee only to underpay taxes and benefit payments, thus jeopardizing the employee's pension and accident insurance coverage. This economic relationship is also a personal one, one of dependency and indebtedness, in which the employer presumably does the employee the favor of

granting employment. In these circumstances, for an employee to seek redress at a union office, or even to report for treatment of a work-related injury at the hospital, amounts to a betrayal of that trust and indebtedness; an employer so betrayed fires the ungrateful woman or man and informs other employers of the incident.

In his study of poverty in Palermo, Dolci (1959) asked hundreds of men and women whether they saw unemployment as the work of God or man. Contemporary Palermitans like those in Dolci's survey attribute unemployment and other abuses unequivocally to men. Pointing to the evidence presented at the massive "maxi-trial" of hundreds of reputed mafiosi in 1986-1987, they portray mafia and government as colluding to profit from their control of the state, to the consequent degradation of the common people.

For many in Albergheria, the departure of Leoluca Orlando, the reform-minded mayor of Palermo (1985-1990), epitomized the corruption of the political system. Between 1986 and 1990, Orlando had built an "anomalous" coalition government from his faction of the Christian Democrats, together with Communists, radical Catholics, and Greens. His government's assault on corruption and mafia, as well as his attention to Palermo's poor, won him the undying admiration of the common folk, although his reforms slowed the construction, financed by drug money, on which poor Palermo has depended heavily from the 1950s. For a time he authorized funding of the many social centers such as the

Centro Sociale in Albergheria that sprang up in the optimism of what activists have called the "Palermo Spring" (1985-1987). In 1990, Orlando headed the Christian Democratic list and carried the party to a remarkable absolute majority. Despite his receiving a record number of "preferential" or non-binding votes which indicate voter preference for a particular candidate, opponents within his party at the local and national levels blocked his entry into office. The Christian Democratic leadership eventually gave the mayoralty to the candidate who placed twenty-third in preference votes (Codevilla 1992: 148). A neighborhood man voiced the sentiment of many when he concluded from the affair that honest politicians are either corrupted, assassinated, or forced out.

It is by this mafia/politics combination that many working Palermitans explain the manifold degradation of their lives and city, especially systemic patronage and unrelenting unemployment. It is common knowledge in Palermo that "nothing gets done" (*non si fa niente*) without bribery, friends, and patrons. A young man, unemployed and, with a high school diploma, relatively well-educated, told me about patronage in the famous competitions for jobs in the public sector:

These things are rigged. Say there are fifty jobs and a thousand applicants. Those in charge set aside forty-five jobs for friends, to use as favors, leaving the remaining five to the crowd. It's impossible, but I keep trying since there's nothing else.

Such assertions, though impossible to prove in a systematic way, find ample substantiation in personal experience and gossip. Everyone has heard of jobs secured or telephones installed overnight through bribery or friendship, just as everyone knows that honest people like themselves do not win jobs in competitions.

At the same time, this state of affairs almost necessitates participation in networks of patronage. Chubb (1982) describes how the livelihoods of Palermitans of all classes are nourished by the rampant patronage emanating from the Christian Democratic machine. Such a situation also underwrites cultural codes such as **furbizia**, the "cleverness" and "cunning" so celebrated in southern Italy (Belmonte 1979; Schneider and Schneider 1976). If people extoll the successful **furbo**, they pity and ridicule the **fesso** ("fool").

During my stay in Palermo, a scandal exploded involving **il mago di Villabate**. This "magician" from a nearby town was said to be able to double investors' money in a matter of weeks, owing to shrewd investment; indeed, during the initial weeks of the game he actually repaid investors. Many, in particular those from popular Palermo, lost thousands when the pyramid scheme finally collapsed. When a neighbor told me of losing several thousand dollars to the magician, I asked why he, of all people, did not see through the scam. He startled me by saying that of course he knew it was a pyramid scheme; his only regret was not

having been **furbo** enough to have invested his money earlier and thereby profited from others' misfortune. I then recalled what another man had told me about the essence of the mafia: "To profit from the misery of others, what we call **maccagno** in Sicilian, is terrible. For me, this is mafia, this is power."

In popular perception, nonetheless, it is the hostile national government in Rome, perhaps allied to northern big business, that somehow perpetuates the plague of unemployment. It is common to hear that the "real mafia" is up North--in the political capital, Rome, and in the financial capital, Milan. "Italy is a democratic republic founded on work," a young man said, quoting the first sentence of the Italian constitution. But, he complained, despite unemployment here the government does nothing. This, in turn, channels frustrated young men into petty crime and mafia. They are the ever ready **mano d'opera** ("manual laborers") of the mafia, one told me. Another threw up his hands, saying "Shit! There's a waiting list to get into the mafia!" The resulting order is reprehensible to many. A tradesman described the exploitation of insecurity as the essence of mafia. Ironically, he also resented how Orlando had instituted three-month workshops to provide relief to the poor who had lost work when the crackdown on mafia stopped so much construction: without bribing the officials at the employment office, he claimed, it was hard to obtain a position in one of these workshops.

Terrible violence and power permeate life in poor Palermo. "It is the rule of the strongest here," a volunteer at the Social Center told me. I recalled a bizarre scene I had witnessed several months earlier. Four boys were playing with a soccer ball, but they were not passing the ball around or playing two-on-two. Instead, the largest boy had lined the others against a wall and was calmly, methodically kicking the ball at them.

To some extent, the activity of the Social Center in Albergheria (and perhaps the "150 Hour Course" at the Garibaldi school in Zisa) offers people the possibility of conceptualizing counter-hegemonic ideals of merit and initiating political action. The Social Center, founded in 1986 during the "Palermo Spring," includes a church, an ex-monastery (renovated to include a local public health office), a cinema, and a cooperative restaurant (*trattoria*). Although headed by a priest and housed in a church, it is "nondenominational" (*aconfessionale*) and "nonpolitical" (*apartitico*) in character. According to its brochure, its goal is to:

...create and maintain a democratic "space" of cultural, economic, social, recreational initiatives, programmed and realized in total and sincere pluralism, [with the conviction] that religious and ideological differences should be accepted and utilized as occasions for enrichment and complementarity rather than for polemics and division.
[CSSS nd]

In the short history of the Social Center, its

organizers have distinguished themselves through a remarkable combination of community programs and participation in the intellectual and political movement against corruption and mafia in Palermo (see, for example, Cavadi 1990; Schneider and Schneider nd). Among the local activities have been: after-school daycare, care for the elderly, a women's group, the health clinic, the restaurant, and a protest for improved housing conditions. Linking these two spheres of activity is the "theology of reclamation" (*teologia di risanamento*) which endeavors to impart to people, through collaboration, the capacity to recognize and pursue their fundamental rights, to raise both their consciousness and self-respect. A young man, one of the first in the neighborhood to approach the Social Center, described its principal benefit as the promotion of the novel idea that people are citizens with rights, not clients begging for favors.

The "150 Hours" courses at Garibaldi, while primarily aimed at bringing students up to eighth grade levels in required subjects, also introduce them to analytic tools for critically examining their environment. Instructors seek to explain the political economy of clientelism in Palermo and how it results in urban degradation and the suppression of political expression. Like the volunteers at the Social Center, teachers at Garibaldi emphasize how ignorance of politics and rights is a consequence of the current political system and helps to reinforce it. With

regard to immigration, they relate it to current global patterns of inequality and to other population movements in the past such as emigration from Sicily. They caution students against anti-immigrant sentiment by noting that as former emigrants they should be sympathetic to the plight of immigrants. They also note that immigrants do not take jobs that Sicilians want, nor do immigrants alter the fundamental injustice of life in Palermo.

The impact of these ideas is hard to gauge, but it is probably not great. Most students are intent only on getting a diploma and do not take the course work seriously, although in each of the four classes I attended some students displayed keen insights. Some, for example, understood that the exploitation of immigrants operates in much the same way as their own marginalization. Teachers also admit that students have a hard time grasping the relation of the global and historical inequalities structuring immigration to their lives in Palermo, or in regarding their place at the bottom of Italian society in a critical manner.

Working Palermitans also attempt to redress their marginalization through claims to cultural superiority. By portraying themselves as innocent victims of the machinations of the powerful, they lay claim to the moral high ground. They see themselves as virtuous upholders of tradition in culture and language against the shameless and self-righteous modernity of the bourgeoisie. They lampoon

inhabitants of the wealthy New Palermo for their inability to speak or even comprehend the "beautiful" local dialect. Working Palermitans also revel in the supposed defects of their own boisterousness and communal street life.

But it is above all with regard to proper behavior between men and women--and the accompanying constellation of ideas and practices concerning honor, dishonor, dating, and marriage--that working Palermitans define themselves as dignified bearers of tradition. Against the liberated ways of the bourgeoisie, they espouse, for example, the ideal of (female) virginity before marriage and engage in the monitoring of nubile girls. Against cohabitation and informal marriage ceremonies they demand the traditional dowry (*corredo*), the blessing of both parents, long-term engagement, and a formal ceremony. As an artisan, proud to be able to provide a proper marriage for his daughter, told me, "we still know how to do things the right way, to follow tradition" (see Booth 1988 for similar accounts in rural Sicily).

Despite these understandings of their oppression and their counter assertions of cultural worth, working Palermitans also accept and live with their own debasement. As Thomas Belmonte (1979: 142) says of the poor of Naples, "They have a culture that is simultaneously against poverty, adapted to the stresses of poverty, and mangled by poverty." However strenuously Palermitans decry the injustice of the system, the apportionment of power and the

logics of value under capitalism and mafia translate their subordination into demerit. A local shopkeeper, apparently oblivious to the existence of the Social Center, commented on the gravity of local problems by saying that "we don't need to send missionaries abroad, we need to sent them here." According to the analysis of an alert young man associated with the Social Center, administrative neglect, joblessness, and lack of services in places like Albergheria foster social degradation in which the destitute lose self-respect, take children out of school to put them to work, and lose interest in the condition of the neighborhood. The Social Center, he concluded, has barely scratched the surface of peoples' consciousness. Another Social Center volunteer described Albergheria as "two realities: people who have been able to redeem themselves [si è saputo riscattarsi] and create a new identity [and] people who do not succeed in redeeming themselves."

Furthermore, rampant clientelism, undocumented income, and contempt for the state implicate many as participants in the general corruption, even if legitimized in their minds as survival strategies. Sicilians often portray tax evasion, for example, as acceptable on the grounds that the government is irresponsible and that it overtaxes Italians in the knowledge that taxes due will never be paid in full. Only a **fesso** would pay all his taxes, while a **furbo** would pay none at all. A man in Albergheria pointed out the hypocrisy in blaming all problems on the government.

Without the complicity and avarice of local elites, he said, the national government would be unable to exploit Sicilians. He went on to say that Palermitans of all classes engage in tax evasion and other illegalities.

The shifting, essentially dyadic organization of networks and patronage, as well as the interest of patrons to preserve scarcity, by working to impede popular political mobilization, generate cynicism and apathy. Guarrasi (1980) observes that major parties and trade and tenants' unions rarely succeed in organizing residents of Albergheria or in getting them to participate in their organizations on a regular basis. Local cynicism and apathy with regard to political participation was evident in responses to the already noted 1990 protest, organized by the Social Center, for safe public housing for people living in barracks. Leaders of the Social Center camped in the middle of a **piazza** as part of the protest. Many local residents grumbled about the inefficiency of such a protest and criticized the foolishness of organizing for the "dirt" of the quarter, as one young man called the barracks residents. Some eventually joined in the protest, and many more were impressed when the protest elicited a visit from the new mayor. But few supported the protest or saw it as an example to be followed in a general struggle for expanded services in the neighborhood.

Importantly, these self-proclaimed bearers of authentic culture rarely attain their ideals. The high

incidence of teenage pregnancy and elopement, for example, contradicts ideals of proper behavior for young women. The poverty of **centro storico** residents means that families often cannot afford proper marriage ceremonies and costly dowries. Some parents pool their resources in order to give one daughter an enviable wedding while encouraging others to elope or suppress their desires. High unemployment also means that many prospective grooms fail to meet the requirements of their girlfriend's parents. Guarrasi (1980: 83) quotes a man who had cloistered his daughters from potential suitors: "I prefer to give them a piece of bread myself rather than give them as wives to some unemployed man or cardboard collector from the quarter." Finally, the very phrasing of working people's assertions of authenticity and moral superiority, which represents their culture in opposition to that of the bourgeoisie of New Palermo, belies their recognition of their own marginality to mainstream Palermo and Italian culture. The contradictory and ambivalent nature of these working-class self-appraisals come to the fore as people interpret the presence and threat of African and Asian newcomers.

5. Of Race and Racism: Tunisian "Moroccans" and Moroccan "Turks"

This section explores the related themes of race and racism in popular Palermo. First I present working peoples' knowledge, stereotypes, and racial categorizations

of their African and Asian neighbors. Then I survey the extent to which they impute to these categorizations additional, undesirable qualities that make immigrants threatening and which might be seen to justify exclusionary action against them.

As one would expect among people with little education, in a country with a short and distant colonial history, working Sicilians' knowledge of immigrants and their countries is meager and their views on race vague. They tend to lump all immigrants under several Sicilian terms signifying dark skin, such as **marocchini** ("Moroccans"), **nivuri** ("blacks"), and **tuichi** ("Turks"). "Moroccan" denotes a dark-skinned foreigner and has been used by many Sicilians at least since World War II. "Black," whether in the Sicilian form (**nivuri**) common to popular Palermo or the Italian one (**neri**) of New Palermo, is used for the same purpose, though less frequently. For the educated, **neri**, which is used to refer for example to blacks in South Africa and the United States, has assumed importance in the debate on racism in Italy. **Negri** ("Negroes") and **tunisini** ("Tunisians") similarly denote dark-skinned foreigners.²

2. Sicilian Americans use "eggplant" to denote blacks, usually in derogatory fashion. A Palermo shopkeeper who had stayed briefly in New York told me this story. A Sicilian emigrant, irritated at a declining value of his property supposedly brought on by the entry of blacks into the neighborhood, would shout out **cornuto mianzane!** (cuckhold eggplant!) at his black neighbors. Another version of the eggplant theme is found in Spike Lee's film, **Jungle Fever**, where Italian Americans in Bensonhurst refer

But no term for immigrants so distinguishes working Palermitans as does the commonly heard **tuichi** ("Turks"). Indeed, mention of the term, so emblematic of the lively historical consciousness of popular Palermo, invariably brings a smile to the faces of local scholars and other observers of life in the old city. The principal local meaning of "Turk" is dark skin, and is applied to appropriately colored Sicilians as well as to foreigners. When applied to Sicilians, it is used as a tease or a nickname. A family in Albergheria, for example, prodded their daughter into a rage by calling her **turka**. Or, an old man might be known as **tuichisceddu**, dark and short.

But **tuichi** connotes danger or alarm as well. Professor Vincenzo Guarrasi (personal communication) traces this usage to the days of piracy on the western Mediterranean. To this day, **mamma li tuichi!** ("Mom, the Turks!") commonly signifies exclamation or alarm throughout southern Italy. Or, the unfortunate Sicilian might be **pigghiatu ri tuichi**, literally imprisoned or pursued by "Turks," but also confused or taken advantage of (Rosario Lentini, personal communication). Thus **tuichi**, when applied to Africans and Asians, denotes not only their characteristic appearance but also carries the connotation of threatening outsiders as well as insiders.

People in Albergheria and Zisa typically employ terms

to blacks as "moulees," the Sicilian American term for eggplant.

for immigrants, whether the common **tuichi** or the rarer **nivuri**, with imprecision and often interchangeably. To a group of Sicilian men conversing in the **piazza**, passing Ghanaians may be **tuichi** today, **marocchini** tomorrow, and **nivuri** next week. Similarly, these Sicilians make little effort to distinguish the various immigrant populations in a rigorous and systematic manner. It is no exaggeration to say that the same group of chatting locals that labels Ghanaians **marocchini**, might well call Tunisians **tuichi** and Moroccans **nivuri**.

Working Palermitans do of course perceive and note broad differences in physical appearance. People tell of their initial shock at seeing the blackness of the sub-Saharan. These distinctions, however, remain crude at present. The label **cinesi** ("Chinese"), for example, distinguishes Filipinos from others. And **negri** refers specifically to African-Americans and sub-Saharan Africans. But **neri** is broad enough to cover all immigrants. One interviewee illustrated the looseness of these distinctions in particularly memorable fashion. I asked him to tell me how he would verbally distinguish a really dark man, say from Ghana, from a light-skinned "Turk," say from Tunisia. He thought a moment, smiled, and replied: "Well, instead of saying **che tuichi** [what a Turk], I'd say **Madonna che tuichi!**" [Madonna, what a Turk!]

I attribute the characteristically vague popular usage of these terms for immigrants to several factors.

Certainly the novelty and recent date of immigration to contemporary Sicily puts the burden of distinction on a small number of dialect terms. Furthermore, the low educational levels in neighborhoods such as Albergheria mean that people there know next to nothing about countries such as Ghana, Tunisia, Morocco. For some, these labels become conflated with nationality. One man, who had attained an elementary school education at night school and who rightly prided himself on his ample knowledge of politics, was embarrassed to learn that the Ghanaian who cleaned the stairway in his apartment building was not actually a "Moroccan." What people do know about immigration they learn through the media, particularly television. In 1990, the year of this research, the media devoted much attention to the issues of immigration and racism, and to the debate and eventual passage of the immigration law. Working Palermitans now know, for instance, that politicians and cultural figures call the **tuichi** by names such as **immigrati di colore** or **immigrati extracomunitari** ("immigrants of color" or "immigrants from outside the European Community"). They continue to use **tuichi**, however, unless they are mocking the pretensions of the bourgeoisie or the rhetoric of politicians.

Can these imprecise, often interchangeable, and stereotypical categories employed by working people be labeled racist? As I discussed in Chapter I (section 2), to qualify as such they must identify immigrants as

belonging to naturally occurring groups, and impute to these groups intractable and essential differences which constitute a threat to Sicilians. Some features of popular characterizations--the habitual use of the plural form and the indiscriminant lumping of the various nationalities, for example--resemble racist thought in that they dissolve the individual into a collectivity and erect us-them distinctions in which "their" differences are forced into a single category (Balibar 1991d; Miles 1989; Van Dijk 1987). But these features, in my estimation, have more to do with Sicilian workers' low levels of education, the novelty of immigration and diversity, and their exclusion from political life with its attention to consistent categorization.

This is not to say that the connotation of threat carried by the *tuichi*, in combination with the highly charged Italian stereotypes of Arabs as perverse and fanatical Muslims (Gallini 1989; Leschiutta 1989), and of Blacks as both dangerous and glamorous (Portelli 1989), will not, in the future, furnish the vehicle for essentializing and racist categorizations of immigrants. Nevertheless, results from interviews and questionnaire surveys in Albergheria and questionnaire surveys among students at Garibaldi show that working Palermitans rarely characterize immigrants in a manner I would call racist, based on the definition developed above. Significant in this regard are responses to survey questions on: 1) the

importance of race, 2) race as a valid reason for restricting immigration, 3) Sicilian-immigrant intermarriage, 4) comparisons of Sicilian versus immigrant populations, 5) comparisons of different immigrant groups, and 6) the immigrants' responsibility for Palermo's problems. (See the Appendix for the complete questionnaire.)

1) At Garibaldi in Zisa school, only 5 out of 54 students agreed with the statement that "A person's race is important and the white race is the best," while 49 out of 54 chose the alternative statement, "A person's race is not important." In the Albergheria sample, only 1 out of 14 voiced the former opinion while fully 13 out of 14 chose the latter.³

2) At the Zisa school, only 2 out of 54 would restrict immigration on the grounds that it would contaminate the white race, while 1 out of 14 similarly expressed themselves in Albergheria.

3) Regarding intermarriage between Italians and immigrants, 27 out of 54 of the Garibaldi students said they thought it is happening or will happen, 7 out of 54 objected to it, 1 out of 54 preempted the question by calling for repatriation, and 9 out of 54 did not respond. In Albergheria, a full 10 out of 14 thought intermarriage

3. The number of respondents in a given sample may differ from question to question because not every respondent answered every question. Where respondents split their answers between, for example, two possible answers I record 1/2 in each category of response.

was happening or would happen, while 2 objected to it and 2 were indifferent. One qualified his objection to intermarriage as "not right for my sister."

4) When asked to evaluate immigrants generally in relation to Sicilians, most (35 out of 55) of the Zisa sample said they were the same, while 10 out of 55 claimed immigrants were "dirty and dangerous," and the same percentage countered that they were "more honest and industrious" than Sicilians. In Albergheria, too, a majority (12 out of 15) described immigrants as equals, while 3 out of 15 saw them as dirty and dangerous.

5) When I asked whether and which immigrant groups were relatively better or worse, 30 out of 55 of the students at Garibaldi saw them as all similar or did not know, while 25 out of 55 agreed to differences but did not list them. In Albergheria, 7 out of 14 said immigrants were all similar, 4 out of 14 did not know, and 3 out of 14 suggested that Filipinos, for example, are good at domestic work and North Africans are good at sales.

6) The questionnaire also asked people to attribute responsibility for Palermo's unemployment and lack of industry to the following phenomena: mafia, national government, regional and city government, African and Asian immigration, and Palermitans themselves. Respondents gave relative responsibility by putting a "1" next to the most responsible phenomena, a "2" next to the second offender, and so on. In the Zisa sample, the mafia, national

government, and the regional and city governments shouldered the blame, collecting 27 out of 54, 14 out of 57, and 11 out of 54 of the first place votes, respectively. Immigrants, in contrast, received but 1 first, 2 seconds, 7 thirds, 6 fourths, and 49 fifths and sixths. Albergherians, for their part, blamed the city's condition on the national government (9 out of 14), while only 1 gave immigrants anything but the lowest rating of responsibility.

In sum, the attitudes towards Africans and Asians of working people in Palermo, as expressed in interviews and questionnaires with these two samples, are far from racist. These Palermitans do not blame immigrants for the chronic problems of the city and do not vilify them in racist terms. This is not to say that "Turks" do not figure in the calculus of worry over jobs and security that is reckoned daily by the poor, as I describe below. Furthermore, it is also conceivable that people in the Albergheria and Zisa samples censored their worst opinions about immigrants out of fear of being labelled "racist." As I described in Chapter II (section 9), from the late 1980s, Italian media coverage of immigration often focussed on potential and actual racist tendencies among Italians. People in Albergheria and Zisa were exposed to these concerns even if they did not debate them or worry a lot about being labelled racist. It is also possible that my status as an intellectual, that is as one perceived to be a

vigilant censor of racism, may have made people cautious in their pronouncements on race and immigration. Before discussing the issue of distortion in the questionnaire results, I will examine the possibility more closely.

Teun Van Dijk's (1987) pioneering study of white "talk and text" about minorities furnishes a set of analytical tools for uncovering racism beneath apparently non-racist discourse. Drawing on hundreds of interviews conducted in Holland (and some in California), he demonstrates how racist discourse as propagated by elites is reproduced through everyday white "positive self-presentation" and "negative other-presentation." With regard to non-elite "talk and text," discourse analysis reveals a typically racist form and content. Immigrants and minorities, for example, tend to be portrayed as fundamentally different, hostile and unwilling to adapt to Western ways, and as competitors unfairly advantaged by government. Van Dijk shows how this racist discourse is reproduced through storytelling, forms of argumentation, semantic moves, style, and rhetoric.

As I discuss in other chapters (II, V, and VI) the representation of immigrants in Italy, focussing on the issues of antiracism and integration, is more positive than elsewhere in Western Europe. Elite validation of racist stereotypes is therefore less common in Italy. Nevertheless, some working Palermitans do utilize these strategies in their positive self-presentation and negative

immigrant-presentation. They regard immigrants not so much as different kinds of people, but as threatening Sicilian security because of their willingness to work for less and because of supposed government favoritism towards the foreigners. Sicilian workers too are sometimes willing to contravene norms against racist talk on the basis of "true" stories. They might also employ the "empathy argument," as did a man in Albergheria who argued against immigration this way: "What do they do, these *tuichi*?" he asked rhetorically. "They suffer. Washing windshields at stoplights, selling lighters on the street--this isn't a life." His hands clapped together in supplication for his listener's understanding, he reached the logical conclusion that it would be better for the immigrants themselves to send them back home.

Palermitans are not strangers to rhetorical ploys such as irony and understatement. More than once I observed conversations where a speaker received a good laugh at the suggestion that "signor Martelli," the Socialist party member who sponsored the bill on immigration, would no doubt be delighted to find several stinking "immigrants of color" living as squatters in the stairway of his Rome mansion.

On balance, however, working Palermitans do not express an ideology of racism, whether in the overt form of questionnaire opinions on the superiority of the white race or in the camouflaged form of discursive strategies. That

only some employ these techniques of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation does not mean that people do not worry about the affect of immigration on their lives, as I will amply document in the remainder of this chapter. But working-class talk and thought about Africans and Asians generally does not seem to be conditioned by the "strategic management of delicate talk" which Van Dijk (1987) sees as symptomatic of racist discourse. Indeed in 1990 workers were only beginning to be aware of norms against racist talk. This is seen in the rarity of semantic moves such as "apparent denial," where the speaker covers himself with the protective "I'm not a racist but...."

There are several other reasons why I claim that the people in my sample did not significantly modify their opinions on immigration. First, the nature of the data collection vouchsafes the results. By the time I interviewed people and gave out the questionnaire in Albergheria, I had lived there for over six months and was accepted as a legitimate researcher and not a scandal-mongering journalist. Moreover, the researchers at the Social Center, who have their fingers on the pulse of the neighborhood, confirmed my findings (personal communication Cosimo Scordato, Donatella Natoli). I spoke at the Zisa school with four different classes, as well as with teachers, in addition to administering the questionnaire. Most important, although I have followed Robert Miles

(1989) in defining racism as a particular type of ideology, a divergence between opinion and behavior towards immigrants would have signalled covert racism, and this I did not find to any significant degree.

As University of Palermo Sociologist Roberto Rovelli put it, Sicilians of all classes do subject immigrants to "a thousand little exploitations" such as exaggerated rents and prices, and underpayment for work (Roberto Rovelli personal communication). But many Palermitans express disgust with reports of anti-immigrant violence and politics in the North of Italy. And the Social Center in Albergheria, as well as other centers and associations that deal with immigrants and the indigenous poor of the old city, report no violence or ill will in working-class Palermo. Rather, some speak of peaceful cohabitation as exemplified by intermarriage, children playing together, friendships, and the exchange of services (childcare for house cleaning, for example). On Sunday afternoons, immigrant families gather with what seems to be most of working-class Palermo at the Foro Italico--an area combining elements of a fair and amusement park that stretches along Palermo's waterfront east of the port.

Third, and finally, immigrants themselves do not speak of confronting racism in the working-class areas in which they live. While some point to exploitative employers and the stigmatizing association of domestic work and dark skin, more immigrants complain about Sicilian deficits of a

different sort: ignorance about their homes, general cultural backwardness, and the lack of a work ethic. Ghanaians, Moroccans, and others told me exasperating tales of their Sicilian neighbors seriously inquiring whether such common objects as cars, houses, and watches existed in their countries (for similar accounts see Crisantino 1992). While this ignorance does not constitute racism in a negative and openly hostile form, it may be linked to a disinterest and mythologizing of the Other. Sicilians asked me no such questions about the United States; rather they sought to be impressed by the modernity and power of my country.

6. Working-Class Understandings of Immigrant Employment

Without a doubt the biggest working-class concern in Palermo regarding foreign workers is the threat the latter represent to the job security of the former. In this section I review workers' interpretations of immigrant participation in the labor market, both as potential workers and competitors, and the ramifications for Sicilian security. In particular I pay attention to the extent to which these understandings recognize and minimize the dual labor market and the insignificance of Sicilian-immigrant competition.

Working Palermitans commonly characterize the jobs worked by immigrants as *i piu umili*, "the most humble." As I described in the section on the dual labor market, these

"humble" jobs read like a list of the humiliating employment once reserved for poor Sicilians and now actively rejected by them with a memory of that humiliation--washing dishes, washing stairs, temporary manual labor such as unloading goods at the markets, domestic work, and, in the countryside, shepherding and agricultural day labor. Sicilian workers have little or no idea that some immigrants, particularly Filipino women who work as full-time domestics or caregivers for the elderly and infirm, enjoy job security, benefits, and relatively high wages at over \$1000 a month.

Sicilian workers correctly point out that immigrants, too, suffer the indignities of "black" work. On one hand, employers exploit their marginality; on the other hand, they are constrained to work for less which, however, may not be a drawback for someone used to Third World wages. Yet Sicilian workers also note intolerance towards and exploitation of immigrants. Respondents in the Zisa sample, for instance, observed that immigrants suffer humiliation as well as economic exploitation. One respondent saw racism as the cause of maltreatment. In the Albergheria sample, the majority of the respondents (9 out of 14) similarly saw foreign workers as victims of exploitation and humiliation.

Even for working-class Palermitans, immigrants are considered potential employees in addition to potential competitors. As discussion of the dual labor market

showed, Albergherians commonly hire Africans to clean the stairways in their apartment buildings. This willingness to take on foreigners is evidenced by answers to the questionnaire inquiry, "If you were an employer, for what reason would you hire or not hire an immigrant?" At Garibaldi a full 42 out of 50 said they would hire such a person, compared to 8 out of 50 who would not on the grounds that Sicilians should be hired. In Albergheria, too, 12 out of 14 agreed to the hypothetical hiring (although two specified that it should occur only if a Sicilian refused), while 2 out of 14 objected.

Constituents of the two samples, however, weighed their decisions somewhat differently. In Zisa, 28 out of 50 claimed they would base hiring on the basic similarity of Sicilians and immigrants, 9 out of 50 because immigrant labor is cheaper, and 5 out of 50 because immigrants are better workers. In Albergheria, by contrast, 4 out of 14 would hire immigrants to give them work, 2 out of 14 on the basis of individual merit, 1 out of 14 because they are similar to Sicilians, and 1 out of 14 because they are cheaper.

These figures do not show, however, what many regard as the most attractive feature of immigrant laborers, namely, their reliability. The Garibaldi school includes a few students who owned and operated small businesses. Classroom discussions with them illustrate this. For example, the story of an owner-operator of an autobody shop

stands out. He often considers hiring Tunisians but stops himself out of concern for Sicilian unemployment. A friend, also in the business, speaks glowingly of the efficiency and reliability of his skilled Tunisian workers; he pays them a fair wage (about 1.1 million lire/month or nearly \$1000) but, "of course," cannot afford to document them. Continuing to hire Sicilians, the student complains that they attempt to take advantage of him at every turn. In short, his moral obligation to his immoral fellow Sicilians forces him to forgo excellent foreign workers. Shaking his head at this dilemma, he commented, "I could get five of them [Tunisians] just like that and yet I deny myself. It's just not right."

Thus many working Palermitans continue to see the presence of immigrants as menacing their job security, notwithstanding their own evaluations of immigrants as reliable workers and the recognition that foreigners are confined to low status and low pay in the dual labor market. The questionnaire, for example, posed two alternative interpretations of the effects of foreigners on the labor market: 1) "They do not have a large effect because they perform jobs refused by Sicilians," and 2) "They take work from us because they accept less." In the Garibaldi sample, 32 out of 54 chose the first response while 22 out of 54 chose the second. In the Albergheria sample, 8 out of 14 chose the first, and 6 out of 14 the second.

The phrasing of this question, which forces some acknowledgement of the dual labor market, no doubt works to underrepresent working Palermitans' ability simultaneously to recognize and ignore labor market arrangements. This facility for contradictory interpretation is more pronounced in the responses to the question concerning who profits and who suffers from the undocumented employment of foreigners. Without hesitation people in the Zisa and Albergheria samples listed themselves as well as immigrants as victims, and employers and government as beneficiaries.

Discussions and interviews corroborate this analysis. Time and again interviewees described the relegation of foreign workers to the lower tier of the dual labor market, as well as Sicilians' own refusal to seek similar work. Yet they summarized the effect of immigrant employment as essentially negative. People commonly claimed that immigrants, by accepting lower wages, drove down wages for all jobs. One woman, who did not begrudge people fleeing hardship through immigration to Palermo, insisted that foreign domestic workers or *colf* accounted for a precipitous decline in wages for domestic work--from 15,000 to 5000 lire per hour (from about \$12 to \$4 per hour), she said. The claim of 15,000 lire per hour is misguided. According to staff members at API-COLF and ACLI-COLF, the two major employment agencies for domestic workers in Palermo, *colf* wages have been unaffected except for a slight and temporary decrease at the time of the first

foreign workers.⁴ Currently both foreign and indigenous **colf** of medium qualification ("second category") receive 6-7000 lire per hour (about \$5 to \$6 per hour, already in excess of the national legal minimum of 4650 lire per hour (about \$4 per hour). Another common complaint is that employers, in hiring "black" foreign labor, circumvent the national (union) contractual agreements that would otherwise serve as benchmarks for wages and benefits in Palermo. While it is true that immigrants, especially those without documentation, enjoy far less legal recourse than do Sicilians to unfair employment practices, this claim too seems farfetched. As economists and sociologists (not to mention Palermitans of all classes) well know, "black" work is rampant in Palermo. It is the circumvention, and not the observation, of national standards for employment that is the rule of the day, particularly at the bottom of the labor market.

There a tension in working-class accounts of foreigners taking up residence in popular neighborhoods, as in the interpretation of immigrants' effect on the labor market. People in the Zisa and the Albergheria samples unanimously decry the degradation of the old city, and the shortage of decent housing. But it is into condemned and substandard housing that Africans and Asians move. Furthermore, people from these areas often rent to

4. API-COLF and ACLI-COLF are described in Chapter III, section 8.

immigrants, at sometimes exaggerated prices and with little attention to improvements or even basic maintenance. Yet some people in Albergheria also hold immigrants responsible for housing degradation (and attendant ills such as competition for housing and rising rents). At the nearby southern end of via Porta del Castrò, the narrow street is darkened by beams which crisscross it to support the buildings on either side. Some point to this obstruction and decay as an example of the "ghetto" immigrants can create.

In conclusion, working people in Palermo both recognize and exaggerate immigrant employment and its consequences for their somewhat tenuous security. I will argue below that this tension in their interpretation amounts to a characteristic and defining ambivalence or contradiction with regard to foreign workers.

7. Of Emigrants and Immigrants

A striking feature of current immigration to Sicily is that it is directed to an island which has been characterized for a century by voluminous emigration, with the exception of the Fascist period, and which has undergone no economic transformation usually associated with attracting foreign labor. In Chapter II (section 5), I described how the increasing segmentation of the European labor market, particularly the demand for cheap and flexible labor, directs immigrants to the lower levels of

all economic sectors in rich and poor regions alike. Although they do not similarly explain this unexpected turn to immigration, many Sicilians ponder the paradoxes of this, to them, recent immigration.

In this section I survey how working Palermitans interpret Sicilian emigration and current African and Asian immigration, singly and in comparison. In the course of the presentation I demonstrate a characteristic ambivalence generated by the tension between, on one hand, a recognition of the similarity of the two population movements and, on the other, assertions of Sicilian superiority and an unwillingness to identify with supposedly inferior immigrants. This fundamental contradiction or ambivalence with regard to evaluations of immigrant employment, and to comparisons of emigration and immigration, is a defining feature of working-class interpretations of Africans and Asians in Palermo.

Emigration became a way of life for Sicilians from the end of the 19th century to the 1970s, with the exception of the Fascist period. Up until World War II, the majority of emigrants were peasants from interior areas, destined for the Americas and Australia. In the postwar period, Sicilians instead made Western Europe and northern Italy their principal destinations. While emigration affected the interior agricultural provinces the most, Palermitans too know about the phenomenon. Some emigrated themselves and many more know of other emigrants, particularly in

recent decades. Many current residents of Palermo, moreover, came from the Sicilian interior in the postwar period. Most of the people in my sample, particularly the students at the school in Zisa, are too young to have participated themselves in emigration, but they are familiar with emigration from the experiences of their families. In interviews and on questionnaires, I sought understandings about the following aspects of Sicilian emigration: 1) its causes, 2) typical employment for emigrants, 3) problems particular to life in the United States, and 4) exploitation and intolerance in northern Italy.

For these working-class Palermitans, it was the massive unemployment and terrible **fame** or "hunger" that drove out hundreds of thousands of Sicilians in search of work. In particular they point to the 1960s and early 1970s, when Sicilians (and other southern Italians) streamed to Switzerland, West Germany, and France. There they worked in factories, construction, mines, and services. In the industrial heartlands of northern Italy, they performed those "most humble" jobs refused by Northerners. Here, at least, emigrants were documented workers, and their condition improved with time.

Working-class assessments of the problems and the experiences of Sicilians in the United States and northern Italy underscore broader ideas about Sicily's reputation in Italy and beyond. Respondents in the two groups express a

consensus that Sicilian emigration to America was a success story. "We even brought a certain fantasy to your country," an older man told me with pride. Indeed, those who did see problems for Sicilians in the United States (28 out of 46 at Garibaldi and 4 out of 14 in Albergheria) listed only temporary impediments to adaptation such as language difficulties and differences of culture. Few listed ethnic and racial antagonism with dominant whites, or with blacks or Puerto Ricans.

Interpretations of Sicilian life in northern Italy, in contrast, are tales of exploitation, marginalization, discrimination, even racism. Forty out of 55 students in the Garibaldi sample and 11 out of 14 people in the Albergheria sample responded yes to the question asking whether Sicilian emigrants in the North experienced exploitation in the form of underpay and bad working conditions, but some also noted northern Italians sense of superiority. Interviewees, moreover, dwelled on northern "racism" against Sicilians. They recalled the exploitation of southern immigrants to the North and their stigmatization as **terroni** and **africani**. Donald Pitkin's moving account of a Calabrian family who emigrated to an area near Rome illustrates anti-southernism and how families remember it. It is 1938 and the father of the family, anxious about his pregnant wife, has rushed to get a doctor. The doctor is visibly disgusted by the sight of this southern woman, aged 40 and with child, living in a

hut. His assessment: "You Calabrians are like Africans, like beasts" (Pitkin 1985: 45). Some interviewees specified that only a minority of Northerners are racists, and that the treatment of Southerners has improved with time; but most contrasted the hospitality of the South with the aloof hostility of the North.

Anti-southernism also touches on current political phrasings of the old "southern question." That is, political commentators have identified southern mafia, corruption and persistent underemployment as impediments to Italian progress. No constituency in northern Italy has exploited these truths--for they do characterize large parts of the South--more successfully for political gain than the Lega Nord.⁵ According to followers of the Lega, Southerners control the national government in Rome, which they use to direct northern taxes into southern pockets and to implement hiring policies which staff public agencies throughout the country with Southerners. Some Lega supporters go so far as to claim that Southerners have taken control of the northern economy and subverted the culture of their hosts. Emma Bassini suggests that Southerners are responsible for low birth rates in Lombardy:

Lombard women have always transmitted to their children the culture and traditions of Lombardy, based on the values of mutual respect, honesty, hard work, altruism, etc. Presently our centralist state under

5. Formerly the Lega Lombarda.

southern hegemony has forced on Lombardy southern culture in which unfortunately predominate cleverness [**furbizia**], the dominance of the strongest, arrogance, corruption and often violence. The Lega Lombarda [Lega Nord] sees in the declining birth rate in Lombardy the uneasiness of a people that, seeing itself enslaved, has decided no longer to reproduce. [quoted in Manconi 1990: 98]

With regard to immigration, in their capacity as de facto heads of government, Southerners are said to have permitted unregulated Third World immigration and the consequent and lamentable "africanization" of northern cities.

Working-class Palermitans take umbrage at these caricatures of lazy, scheming, mafioso Southerners. Mere mention of the Lega insures an avalanche of rebuke, counter-argument, and denial. In interviews, people described the Lega variously as "the ruin of Italy" (**la rovina d'Italia**), "crazy racists," (**razzisti pazzi**), and "nuts" (**gente saltata**). They acknowledge that the Lega represents the minority view in the North, but give anti-southernism as the main reason they would never move North.

Caricatures put out by the Lega represent only an extreme and highly publicized portrayal of the common image of a corrupt and backward South. A recent study in the northern city of Pavia demonstrated that youth there express more antipathy towards Southerners than towards any other category of "foreigner," be it blacks, Jews, Arabs, or Orientals (Colucci et al. 1989). Working-class Palermitans inevitably counter by claiming "the fish stinks from the head," that is, that the "real mafia" is the

national government in Rome and the financial center in Milan.

I understood the intensity of this resentment one day when I entered a small shop in Albergheria. Although I had done little business there, the man took me into his confidence as soon as he learned I was an American. He proceeded to harangue me on the subject of the "Roman" exploitation of Sicily. The politicians in Rome, he said, stay awake at night concocting new taxes on small, family businesses like his. The latest fiscal imposition was a tax, yes, on floor space. Orlando, the mayor of Palermo, was ousted because he challenged this corruption: "They're like a gang of thieves, who kill the only honest member." In short, the "Romans" who disrespectfully call Sicilians **terroni** think only of their pocketbooks. The real tragedy, he concluded, was that Sicily could have been an American state, if only the "Romans" had not talked Roosevelt out of supporting the Sicilian movement for American statehood after World War II. At this point his son came in. He shook his head, "And to think he could have been an American. But he's an Italian, unfortunately!" He practically spit on the newly taxed floor.

Working Palermitans' views of current immigration resemble in many ways their accounts of Sicilian emigration. According to them, Africans and Asians are fleeing poverty and oppression, perform tasks refused by self-respecting locals, and suffer exploitation,

indifference, and even intolerance. These Sicilians are conversant in the travails of migration and they empathize with the immigrants who must leave family and country behind to take a step forward. One man described immigration this way: "By now, the world is like a village; you search for work [everywhere] just to live, to support your family." Some carry the parallel further. Another told me, in a matter of fact tone, that just as northern Italians thought themselves superior to southern emigrants, so too do Sicilians consider themselves above Africans and Asians (for a similar appraisal from southwest Sicily, see Cusumano 1976).

Public officials and the representatives of relevant institutions have made explicit this implicit comparison or equation between emigration and immigration. While talk about the duties of a "country of emigration" is also heard at the national level, nowhere is this idiom more resonant than in Sicily. Almost all the institutional representatives whom I interviewed in Palermo (and elsewhere on the island) derived from the experience of Sicilian emigration an obligation for contemporary Sicilians to receive and respect immigrants. Some pointed to the "historical memory" of emigration as the cause for Sicilian tolerance towards foreigners. Others lamented the lapse of such memories and a consequent widespread indifference and intolerance. But all agreed that the duty remained and that Sicilians, especially the working classes

which are thought most susceptible to intolerance, must be taught this if they do not already know it. The Social Center in Albergheria and the equivalency courses at Garibaldi in Zisa both alert residents to the dangers of intolerance and promote the idea that former emigrants owe understanding and sympathy to new immigrants.

For working Palermitans, however, the basic economic similarities of the two migrations do not so easily translate into an obvious duty towards, or an identification of common cause with, immigrants. There are those who, like the tradesman from Albergheria, say that Sicily is "their America," their land of opportunity. Immigrants, he said, have as much right to come to Sicily as his own forefathers had to go to the United States. According to volunteers at Caritas, the charitable organ of the Catholic Church, indigenous poor often say that immigration has not changed their lives: "we had nothing before and we have nothing now." But most workers are profoundly ambivalent if and when they compare emigration and immigration. For just as their interpretation of foreign participation on the labor market is riven by contradiction and tension, so too is their interpretation of emigration and immigration. Both engage more general class anxieties and insecurities. Thus empathy for the immigrant's lot, and understanding of the mechanisms of common oppression, are checked by a refusal to identify with Third World immigrant populations who are considered

inferior or at least undeserving of opportunity in Italy.

Responses to four interview and questionnaire topics eliciting comparisons of the two migrations illustrate this characteristically ambivalent working-class position.

1) The first asks whether immigrants will contribute in the future to Italian development through their labor and culture or whether they will instead not contribute but take resources away from Italians. In the Zisa sample, a slim majority see immigrants (27 out of 51) contributing, while support in Albergheria is higher (8.5 out of 12).

2) The second question presents three choices: 1) supporting regulated immigration because 27 million Italians emigrated abroad for work in this century or not supporting it because of 2) fears of contaminating the white race or 3) because of joblessness among Italians. Again, a slim majority support immigration (31 out of 55 at Garibaldi and 7.5 out of 14 in Albergheria) and a sizable minority objects on the grounds of unemployment.

3) The third question asks whether the national government, in passing legislation on immigration in 1990, was irresponsible with regard to Italians in the sense that immigration endangers Italian jobs, wages, and security. Here, too, many support the government's action, by 22 out of 51 in Zisa and 4.5 out of 11 in Albergheria. These results should be treated with caution, however. As I found out in classroom discussions in Zisa, few actually know what the law entails, despite the heavy media coverage

of the prolonged and heated parliamentary debate at the time. In fact 14 out of 51 students at Garibaldi and 4 out of 11 people in the Albergheria sample answered "don't know" to the question and many others responded with a simple "yes" or "no."

Popular outrage over an immigrant protest held in the Spring of 1990 also demonstrated a lack of working-class sympathy for measures protecting immigrants. The "strike of the immigrants," as it was known in Albergheria, was actually a brief march entitled "Rights Have No Color" organized by the union CGIL (Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro) in protest of poor immigrant living and working conditions. Many Albergherians interpreted the action as a brazen and selfish claim by immigrants on the resources due, but so long denied, to average Palermitans. They also criticized the union for in effect dismissing their own grievances by giving priority to immigrants. Even those sympathetic to the march lamented the tactical blunder committed by CGIL officials in splitting the protest of foreign and indigenous workers. The march stirred a temporary controversy that did not lead to any political response on the part of local workers. Their reaction was not lost on union officials, however; within months the CGIL had scheduled a new protest in which both foreign and Sicilian workers would unite in their call for better opportunities.

4) The fourth question asked if, and how, Sicilian

emigration is comparable to current immigration to Sicily. Here many saw more difference than similarity in the two migrations: 26 out of 49 (with 10 "don't know's") in Zisa and 7 out of 13 in Albergheria. I had anticipated as points of comparison the cultural and racial makeup of the populations, and the economic and political circumstances of their migrations. Many respondents, especially in the Zisa sample, limited themselves to one word answers. The respondents who did elaborate distinguished the two population movements in terms of time period, economic development in the host countries (Sicilian emigrants worked in factories whereas immigrants work on the street and in the fields), and motivation (immigrants left for reasons of political freedom, whereas Sicilians left in search of work). Several respondents also claimed that "immigrants do not work as hard as we do" and that "we're just different."

These questionnaire results could be seen simply as evidence of divided opinion. But I argue that they are the numerical expression, so to speak, of a deeper ambivalence towards immigration, an ambivalence rooted in the precariousness of working-class life. Ambivalence is in fact a defining feature of working-class interpretation of immigration, and sets it off from the consistently pro-immigration views of the bourgeoisie which I describe in the next chapter. The strength of the contradiction was impressed on me repeatedly in interviews and classroom

discussions. These Sicilians acknowledge the poverty that compelled Sicilian emigration, as well as emigrants' experience of discrimination and humiliation. And they burn with resentment at northern Italian stereotypes of the lazy and mafioso Southerner. They can also discuss the motives and experiences of immigrants with remarkably similar terms. Furthermore, they understand their own and immigrants' exploitation to be based on the system of undocumented and underpaid labor. But they rarely volunteer comparisons of emigration and immigration; and when asked about the comparison, more often than not they strive to deny any real similarity, that is, similarity in oppression and identity. When teachers at Garibaldi sponsored a conference in Spring 1990 on immigration, teachers of the "150 Hours Course" asked students who had emigrated to Germany in the 1960s and 1970s to come forward and tell the audience about their experiences. Only one came forward, although several had been solicited before the conference and the entire class was required to attend. Angela Aiola, the teacher who organized the conference, interpreted this reluctance as embarrassment to admit publicly to having suffered hardship (Angela Aiola, personal communication). She went on to say that it is not uncommon for students with low-paying, undocumented work to insist that they "are doing fine" (*sto bene io*) when asked about their situation. Similarly, a study found that southern Italian middle and high school students both

recognize their marginalization as Southerners and distinguish themselves as modern Westerners from the Third World immigrants in their areas (Camarota 1990).

More than one informant was reduced to hemming and hawing at the point in the interview when I asked if the two population movements (which had already been discussed separately) were not really basically similar phenomena. When I asked one young man to compare emigration and immigration, he threw up his hands in exasperation and turned to a co-worker, pleading "what am I going to say to that?" Interviewees rehearsed all manner of potentially differentiating features, citing differences in historical period, language, dress, etc., that skirted the question of basic similarity. But after countless hesitations and revisions, most hit on this crucial distinction: Sicilians brought skills to their new homes and contributed to their development, while Africans and Asians come from lands without resources, "without history" even, and consequently lack skills and cannot contribute to Italy.

8. A Note on the Form and Distribution of Working-Class Views

Throughout this chapter, I have spoken in broad terms of working-class self-assessments and opinions on immigration. Now I turn to the question of the form and distribution of these views. Form, in this context, refers to logical consistency, vocabulary, and tone of opinion.

It merits analysis because, as I will show in the next chapter, it diverges by class. Examination of the distribution of opinion by the parameters of age, sex, education, and employment status permits comparison with samples drawn from opinion polls elsewhere. Also, it is important to examine the racist inclinations of young working-class Palermitans because most of the anti-immigrant violence and graffiti in the North of Italy has been committed by young men professing various neo-Nazi, neo-Fascist, skinhead, and **ultra** (soccer fan of hooligan variety) credos.

The most striking features of popular talk in Palermo are the use of dialect and logical inconsistency. I have already described the usage of various terms in Sicilian for foreigners such as **tuichi** and **marocchini**. Glaring inconsistencies abound in individual questionnaire responses, interviews, and informal discussions. Those who claim the superiority of the white race on the questionnaire, for example, also hold intermarriage to be acceptable and are disposed to hire immigrants on the grounds of equality. There was the local craftsman who on one occasion proposed that medals be issued to all interracial couples as a reward for championing equality over racism. But the next day, he who had been so moved by the prospect of racial harmony entertained a small crowd outside his shop with a modest proposal for ridding the island of these unwanted "Turks" who plague Palermitans at

every stop-light to sell cigarette lighters and wash windshields. Sicilians should take them all to the ferry, have them clean every window to a high shine, and ship them back to Tunisia, or dump them at sea.

Low educational levels and exclusion from influential public discourse account for this characteristic inconsistency. The majority of older adults in working-class Palermo hold an elementary school degree, and the majority of youth an eighth-grade diploma. Meager schooling explains some of the typical lack of concern for logical consistency. The exclusion of working people from the resources, rules, and standards of influential public discourse is at least as important. Some aspects of Frank Reeves' (1983:78) distinction between "specialized political discourse" and "general discourse," although formulated to distinguish between political and everyday usage, provides a useful contrast for class-specific discourse on immigration in Palermo. Politicians, institutional representatives, intellectuals, and the bourgeoisie employ, to various extents, a specialized discourse which is integrated, consistent, and linked to explicit ideologies. Everyday discourse, as exemplified by the Albergheria and Zisa samples, is "weakly structured," less concerned with consistency, and often made up of "unrelated explanations." While the former seeks to persuade, explain, and justify, the latter serves to express opinions. Differential access to the means and

content of public and political communication tends to reinforce the general features of these discourses. With little training in and limited access to influential discourse, working Palermitans have little call to arrange their opinions in systematic fashion.

The Palermo evidence corroborates research conducted elsewhere in Italy and Europe (see, for example, Amodio 1989; Bonifazi and Golini 1989; Guala 1989; Italia-Razzismo 1990; Van Dijk 1987:357-8). Women, youth and, anticipating the bourgeois samples of the next chapter, more educated and higher status employees all tend to profess more tolerance for foreigners, according to these earlier studies. My results are similar, although rough indicators of class, education and job status are generally more determinant than sex and age. Union and political party membership seem to have almost no correlation with interpretations of immigration. This is probably because working Palermitans are rarely politicized, and because neither parties nor unions in Palermo have seriously addressed the issue.

It is true that my survey data from Albergheria and Zisa do not lend themselves to an exacting measurement of the correlation between parameters and opinions. The former sample is too small, while the latter is weighted to younger people of similar education. In my estimation, however, the general working-class interpretation of immigration which I have characterized as ambivalent and

inconsistent, pessimistic but empathetic, describes the stance of most working Palermitans. There are, I think, three partial exceptions. The truly dispossessed, who practice the *l'arte di arrangiarsi* as scavengers or running illegal daily lotteries, some youth with relatively high levels of education but no acceptable job prospects, as well as those who sell goods at weekly markets or on the street--all tend to express somewhat harsher views on immigration. The grumblings of people in these categories are, nevertheless, still of a different sort from the organized animosity and outright violence facing immigrants in the Italian North, as I explore in more detail in Chapter VI.

Finally, working-class interpretation is more flexible and open to change than I have perhaps allowed in my description. Immigration to contemporary Sicily is a novelty and the composition of the immigrant population is in flux as new people arrive and others move northward in search of steady work. Sicilians, unlike northern Italians, have no experience interacting with and stereotyping incoming and subordinate populations. The political parties, by not addressing immigration as an important issue, have not encouraged views to coalesce around a limited number of explicit positions characteristic of specialized political discourse.

The arrival of a Moroccan family into my building showed me the flexibility of popular conceptions of

foreigners. The Sicilians coolly, even disdainfully, received these, the first "Turks" to settle in this part of Albergheria. But the initial haughtiness was counterbalanced by curiosity and confusion. They were Moroccan yet "didn't look it," with their light skin and casual European appearance. They were from the Third World yet came from Belgium, played loud rock music, possessed championship judo skills, spoke a variety of languages, and treated everyone as equals. They spoke with pride of their Islamic faith but the women did not veil themselves, and the brother did not abstain from wine or beer. The spectacle of Mohammed running windsprints and performing exercises on the piazza below dumbfounded whole balconies of silent and observant Sicilian neighbors unaccustomed to such athletic displays. Within a week the local youth were impressed by, perhaps envious of, the Moroccans' skills, aplomb, and knowledge of the world. They would look with curiosity at the son and me as we spoke in English of the N.B.A. (National Basketball Association), as he told ridiculous jokes in French or complained about the ignorance of his neighbors. The entry of the Moroccan family did not dispel all the anti-immigrant prejudices of local residents, as the perception of them as exceptional suggests, but their presence did change the opinions of some people. By means of exchanges of food, hospitality, and conversation with Sicilian neighbors, and through the employment of the youngest daughter in a local shop, the

Moroccans were in time brought into the fabric of neighborhood life.

9. Conclusion: Interpreting the Ambivalence of Working Palermitans Towards Immigrants

This chapter asked whether, and how, working Palermitans express "working-class racism" against Third World immigrants. In my estimation, very few do. Few identify immigrants as a specific racial group with unalterable and undesirable qualities that constitute a threat to Sicilians and justify action against them. Rather, most express a profound ambivalence straddling comprehension and nagging worry over self-worth and security, expressed in the idioms of competition and threat. As longtime emigrants, Sicilians understand the pain and humiliation of immigration. They see immigrants, like themselves, oppressed and struggling beyond decency simply to support their families. They also see them performing jobs they have rejected, and even as reliable and cheap workers. At the same time, working Palermitans portray Africans and Asians as competitors on the labor market (and, to a lesser extent, for housing). And they balk at acknowledging similarities in circumstance, oppression, and identity between Sicilian emigration and current immigration. In contrast to the abstract and universalistic interpretations of immigration among Palermo's bourgeoisie and relevant institutions and associations, working-class views, typically informed by

dialect and local understandings, are, as well, stubbornly pessimistic.

In this final section I shall explore the key issue of ambivalence, which I regard as the most noteworthy finding of this study. Low levels of education, predominance of dialect over Italian, and exclusion from influential public discourse--all these hallmarks of popular Palermo account, perhaps predictably, for the individual inconsistency and local color of interpretations. But ambivalence and contradiction become characteristic and powerful because they engage fundamental class insecurities and identities. The signature insecurity of popular Palermo rests on the precariousness of employment and on political, economic, and cultural marginalization. While working Palermitans vehemently reject their oppression and oppressors, they also tacitly accept their own denigration, which is argued so persuasively, so to speak, by their evident subordination.

It is precisely these understandings of self which structure the characteristic ambivalence towards foreign workers of the Sicilians I encountered. The ambivalence is pronounced, as I have shown, on the issue of immigrant participation on the labor market. People in Zisa and Albergheria can readily enumerate the lowly jobs relegated to immigrants, jobs they flatly reject, jobs such as dishwashing and live-in domestic work. Some find that the foreigners perform these tasks more cheaply and especially

more reliably than fellow Sicilians. Finally, they recognize that the exploitation of Africans and Asians through underpayment and lack of documentation, for example, is only an exaggerated form of their own exploitation. Yet, in the face of such acknowledgements, many workers steadfastly maintain that immigrants "take their bread," that immigration would be fine "if only there were work for us." The logic behind such thinking seems to be: we are unemployed, they work, therefore they take our work; and, foreigners should not enjoy the opportunity to work in our country, even if we refuse the jobs they take, because they are undeserving in the sense that they have not contributed to it as we have. The Sicilians who pursue this logic further claim that immigrants lower wages generally and provide employers with cheap and undocumented labor instead of with the otherwise standard union-rate, documented labor. But, as I argued earlier, immigrants depress wages (if they do) only in specific sectors, and documented work and union wages are not the rule of the day in Palermo, as people know all too well.

The somewhat extreme opinions of a young Albergherian illustrate the depth of this contradiction. At the time of the interview, he was finishing up a three month **cantiere** program for unemployed youth, after which he would perform his obligatory military service. He spoke with the detachment of someone who would confront the problem of landing work only in the distant future. When I asked him

about "black" work in Palermo, he sighed, and told me the story of a friend by way of example. The friend, who possesses a trade school degree in accounting, works full-time for the pitiful sum of 300,000 lire/month (about \$250). The interviewee blamed employers' cutting costs for the pervasive underemployment and undocumented employment. He also felt the mafia gained through the clientelistic distribution of jobs and favors. He assured me that he would never accept such exploitation; nor would he humiliate himself by washing stairs like the "Turks." He elaborated on immigrant work, saying that whereas Sicilians refuse it or do it poorly, foreigners do it well. Indeed, it was not possible to find a Sicilian to wash the stairs in his building. Later in the interview he addressed the question of immigration again. He objected to immigrants' presence because they steal work from locals. He explained that employers hire them for less rather than hiring Sicilians at fair and union wages. His harsh conclusion: "They're infecting the city, we must ship them back home." When I reminded him that his friend, who like so many endures no African or Asian competition at his place of work, also works "black" for little, he stumbled over his words, flustered that I had made explicit the implicit contradiction in his account. He eventually proposed this resolution: his friend does not actually work very hard and, furthermore, his employer has two other workers on the payroll and so understandably cannot afford to pay higher

wages.

This interview exposes all the depth of working-class feeling about foreign workers on the labor market. Here is the unproblematic, if contradictory, accommodation in the popular mind of both the recognition and denial of the dual labor market. Supporting this is the complex understanding of the place of working people in the system. This young man sees his class unjustly exploited by employers and mafia; yet he also sees himself as above the detestable "Turks," whose performance of lowly tasks enacts and proves their inferiority. At the same time the immigrant presence constitutes a threat to jobs and to the city itself. The immigrant threat is thus another manifestation of an unjust system, since it was the Italian state that aided and abetted immigration, and employers and mafia who profit from it.

Working people's ambivalence towards immigrants also shows up in their comparison of emigration and immigration; contradictory recognition and denial structure this sense of a parallel between the two population movements. Sicilian empathy for immigrants is born of the protracted pain of Sicilian emigration and, perhaps, the related experience in the North as stigmatized *terroni*. Working Palermitans describe emigration and immigration in remarkably similar terms. Yet many steadfastly deny any significant similarity between the two movements and all that the parallel entails. They fail to see, for example,

that Sicilians once appeared as destitute and inferior as "Africans" and Turks" now do, that immigrants will contribute to Sicily just as Sicilians contributed to New York and Turin, that similarities in oppression and circumstance constitute some form of common identity and entail, perhaps, a responsible acceptance of immigrants and laws for their protection.

Just as the young man stumbled over the contradiction, once made apparent, in his interpretation of foreign workers on the labor market, so too did interviewees often hesitate, grow cautious, when I asked them to make explicit their implicit comparison between themselves and immigrants. They unfailingly sought to resolve this contradiction by positing differences in performance and merit. Whereas Sicilians contributed to their new homes through their skills and labor, "Turks" bring nothing but empty bellies and untrained minds, and could never contribute to Palermo and Italy. These Sicilians push this resolution because to equate themselves with Africans and Asians would be tantamount to equating themselves, their identity and self-worth, with the absolute standard of misery that is, for them, the Third World. That immigrants are, on average, as well educated as Italians underscores the irony of these claims, but it does not expose those who made them as hypocritical because working Palermitans know next to nothing about the socioeconomic characteristics of the immigrant population.

This international solution, so to speak, to the status dilemma exacerbated by the immigrant presence also permits working Palermitans to elide their evident subordination within the national political economy. But this solution is temporary at best. For they become associated with immigrants not simply out of general parallels between emigration and immigration, but also from living and (perhaps increasingly) working together. As Reeves (1983) has said of British working-class racism, it draws power and bile from the status dilemma of supposedly superior whites who find themselves working and living alongside, and therefore being equated with, the putatively inferior blacks of the former colonies.

The dilemma over self-worth and status explains the reluctance of many working Palermitans to see immigrants as contributors to Sicily. The following example illustrates the complexity of this position. In response to my question about the potential contribution of immigrants, a young man responded by pointing to the dangers of immigration as exemplified by the experience of the United States. What is happening there is just terrible, he exclaimed. "The Chinese mafia is now stronger than the Sicilian one!" This utterance, delivered without a hint of irony, betrays the curious workings of anti-southernism in the South. Here the speaker stigmatizes immigrants while unwittingly accepting the unflattering stereotype of the mafioso Southerner. This slip recalls the not uncommon

Palermitan rejection of North Africans on the grounds that "they're too much like us"-- that is, lazy, scheming, and untrustworthy.⁶ I return to the notion of self-hatred in Chapter VII.

The nationalist element in working-class objections to immigration also explains the popular outrage over the "strike of the immigrants" described above. Sicilians were angered, of course, by the temerity of foreigners demanding what they feel themselves to be owed but have long been denied by a hostile and inefficient system. But what they may have feared most of all in this incident was less the immigrants' call for decent conditions--which Sicilian emigrants had also demanded--than the prospect that the government would neglect them in order to aid these "immigrants of color." For just as Rome was thought to have permitted immigration to the detriment of the native working classes, so too could the government not be trusted to vouchsafe the rights of citizens above those of foreigners. In other words, working-class interpretations of the system anticipate the plausibility of government favoritism towards immigrants.

6. Marco Jacquemet reports similar attitudes in Naples (personal communication).

Chapter V

"Turks" and "Immigrants of Color": Bourgeois and Working-Class Interpretations of Immigrants in Palermo

The recent proliferation of violence and political agitation against immigrants, refugees, and settled minorities in Europe has rightly gained wide attention and condemnation as racist, xenophobic, and intolerant. Analyses of the new racism have trained our attention on racist and antiracist political discourse and its implications (e.g., Barker 1981), while accounts of the political economic role of these populations have documented their exploitation and marginalization (e.g., Castles 1984; Castles and Kosack 1985). But scholars have rarely addressed the class distribution of European reactions to immigration and race (Miles 1989). The few who have dealt with the question of class have focused on the problem of working-class racism, as was described in the last chapter. On the whole, commentators have overlooked bourgeois interpretations of race and immigration, perhaps because the low incidence of hostility towards immigrants among this class, as expressed in opinion polls, makes their views seem unproblematic.

In this chapter I shall address the question of class variation by discussing the ways members of the Palermo bourgeoisie interact with and interpret African and Asian

immigration, and contrast this analysis to the working-class reactions discussed in the last chapter. This contrast, though simple, 1) permits a disaggregation of public attitudes otherwise seen as homogeneous, 2) points to the class bases of divergent views and actions, and 3) reveals different capacities for shaping influential, public discourse and political action. My research shows, in fact, highly contrastive and class-specific views on immigration, racism, and antiracism. As I described in the last chapter, the often inconsistent, ambivalent working-class appraisal of immigrants is grounded in local understandings and conditions, and expressed in the contrastive idioms of competition and empathy. Educated bourgeois stances for immigrant rights and against racism, in contrast, rest on universalistic tenets and find sophisticated expression and consistent form.

This chapter is based in large part on questionnaire responses from students at an elite high school or lycee (*liceo*) and the University of Palermo. Because I administered the questionnaire towards the end of my study, I was unable to participant-observe at these schools. Starting in section 7, I have tried to supplement the student samples by drawing on a snowball sample consisting of the many professional people whom I met in Palermo in the course of my study. In the future I plan to conduct interviews and observations among similar students and the bourgeoisie generally.

1. Research Population and Research Methods

I complemented investigation of "working-class racism" with two questionnaire surveys, the first in Palermo's most prestigious public classical lycee, the second at the University of Palermo. In terms of the class structure discussed in Chapter III, the first sample represents the **alta borghesia** or bourgeoisie proper of New Palermo, while the second sample represents both the petite bourgeoisie and upwardly mobile working class of the countryside. Despite the noteworthy differences in the two samples--the first comprised of the children of Palermo's upper professional and bureaucratic ranks, the second a broad sampling from the countryside--I treat the two together here, supported by the similarity of responses. I will argue below that this convergence of opinion stems from participation in higher education which imparts that repertoire of attitudes which, here as elsewhere, constitutes a large component of the "cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1984) that distinguishes the lettered from the unlettered.

The first group consists of the responses of 44 students at the classical lycee I shall call "Ruggero II." These 10 males and 34 females between the ages of 16 and 18 are in their final two years of lycee. The questionnaire was administered by their history and philosophy teacher, whom I met through a mutual friend.

The class position of the lycee students, their

experiences with and interpretations of immigrants, are wholly opposed to those of the Albergheria and Zisa samples. These students come from affluent neighborhoods in New Palermo such as Malaspina, Palagonia, and Libertà, areas buffered from the dilapidated old city to the south and east by a commercial area and several monumental public buildings, and fanning out from the tree-lined Via della Libertà. The characteristic architecture of the New Palermo--a mixture of sleek high-rises and turn of the century "Liberty" style villas--contrasts with the crumbling old city and the ugly housing developments on the periphery.

The mothers as well as the fathers of the students are steadily and profitably employed professionals and high-ranking bureaucrats. The students themselves are bound for university studies and similar careers. While working people in Albergheria and Zisa live alongside African immigrants, the bourgeoisie tend to encounter mainly Asian immigrants. For them, Filipinos, Cape Verdians, Mauritians, and Sri Lankans represent not neighbors, co-workers, or competitors, but trustworthy and fashionable household staff. These students occasionally meet foreigners in associations or at events such as the annual Festa dell'Unità, an important cultural fair held in late summer in cities throughout Italy and sponsored by the former Communist Party.¹ But they primarily meet

1. Hereafter referred to by its current name, the

immigrants as domestic workers in their homes and in the homes of their friends.

The University of Palermo students, in contrast, come from working and petite bourgeois backgrounds in the small agricultural towns of the interior from which so many Sicilians emigrated over the past century. While the parents of the typical Ruggero II student might be high level bureaucrats and teachers, a university student's mother is a housewife and his or her father could well be an agricultural day laborer or a local merchant. These students are good examples of the recent general shift in class formation in rural Sicily from working-class to bourgeois status. They are obtaining a higher education but still speak the Sicilian dialect as well as Italian. They have familiarity if not firsthand experience with emigration but probably would not follow their uncles' and fathers' trajectories to northern factories. And their friends, too, tend to be educated, white-collar employees, doctors, and teachers. Assisted by a university librarian well known among students, I gave the questionnaire to students at a student dormitory and university center catering to students from out of town, located near the Albergheria parish church. The sample consists of 15 males and 11 females between 19 and 30 years of age.

The students from both of these samples present a sophisticated, universalistic, and consistently pro-

Democratic Party of the Left.

immigrant stance which contrasts with the ambivalence and inconsistency of the working-class samples. Differences in terminology signal this gulf. One of my neighbors in Albergheria depicted this difference with characteristically popular flair and with a vocabulary which recalls working peoples' self-presentation as virtuous bearers of traditional culture:

In popular areas we call them **tuichi** [Turks] whereas in Via [della] Libertà and [Via] Strasbourgo they use finer names like **extracomunitari** and **immigrati di colore**. They think of us as impolite and as criminals, and there are some of those here. They think they're finer and more polished, but they have "the horns" [are cuckolds]. The wife gives them to the husband and they like it!

I asked him if this had anything to do with immigration and he replied no, he was just describing the bourgeoisie.

2. Of Race and Racism

The views of what my neighbor called the "fine" people and their children--as well as those of the university students--typically reflect those of most Italian intellectuals and institutions concerned with immigration (described in Chapter II, section 9). With regard to race and racism, they draw on the post-Holocaust consensus that the very concept of race is questionable and that racist theory and practice are immoral. Because the campaign against racism has set the tone for much debate over immigration during the past several years, a willingness to worry about the possibilities of racism in Italy serves to

define membership in the circle of the lettered.

Review of the six pertinent survey questions shows the familiar tandem promotion of racial equality and condemnation of racism among the student samples. (See the Appendix for the questionnaire.) These questions, which I employed in the last chapter as a diagnostic of working-class attitudes on race and racism, concern the following themes: 1) the importance of race, 2) the validity of race as a criterion for restricting immigration, 3) Sicilian-immigrant intermarriage, 4) Sicilian as compared with immigrant migration history, 5) comparison between different immigrant populations, and 6) the responsibility of immigrants for the problems of Palermo.²

1) Race, for these students, has no bearing on the merits of individuals or groups. While almost 10% of the students at the Zisa school agreed with the statement "A person's race is important and the white race is best," at Ruggero II and the University of Palermo all (save one college prankster) chose the reply, "A person's race is not important." One lycee student even corrected the very phrasing of the question by disputing the validity of the concept of race: "People do not belong to races."

2) Similarly, none of the lycee students would restrict immigration to protect the white race, while the

2. As before, the total number of respondents within a given sample may differ from question to question because I report only those who answered any particular question fully. Where respondents split their answers I report their responses as fractions.

one university student who so objects probably does so by mistake, because this response contradicts all his other answers.

3) Again, all students agree that intermarriage between Sicilians and foreigners is happening, or will happen. One Ruggero II student, however, states her intention to never so marry, and one university man points to the difficulties of marriage across cultures. While working-class samples also thought intermarriage probable, these students typically go on to endorse it. One lycee student described it as a means for achieving the goal of racial equality:

I think it would be beautiful. I hope that it happens as soon as possible because I believe in a multiracial and multi-ethnic society in which all are equal.

4) When asked to evaluate immigrants against Sicilians, most lycee students (34 out of 43) and almost all university students (22 out of 24) see the two populations as "the same." While 6 out of 43 lycee students and one university student judge immigrants "more honest and industrious" than Sicilians, only 3 out of 43 at the lycee and 1 out of 24 at the University describe them as "dirty and dangerous." (One of the lycee student's negative appraisals was at odds with the rest of her questionnaire.) The majority of people in Albergheria (12 out of 15) and Zisa (35 out of 55) also see immigrants as

basically the same as themselves. Working-class views are somewhat more negative on the whole: 10 out of 55 in Zisa, and 3 out of 15 in Albergheria, view immigrants as "dirty and dangerous," while 10 out of 55 in Zisa, and none in Albergheria, claim they are "more honest and industrious" than Sicilians.

5) Reactions to the question concerning the relative merits and demerits of different immigrant groups show an unwillingness to stereotype. At the university, the majority (15 out of 25) judge immigrants to be just like them, 7 out of 25 did not know, and 3 acknowledge differences without describing them. At Ruggero II, most students (21 out of 43) do not respond or do not know; a large minority (15 out of 43) dismiss the idea of comparison by saying that we are all the same or by saying that the qualities of immigrants hinge on the possibilities Italians offer them. Finally, 9 out of 43 see differences. Of those who offer examples, 2 describe Asians as honest, while 3 describe North Africans as bad (*imbroglione pericolosi*, "dangerous cheats," one calls North African vendors), and one sees Africans as good people.

6) The final question asked respondents to rank, from most to least responsible for Palermo's chronic unemployment and lack of industry, the following phenomena: mafia, national government, regional and city government, the global economy, African and Asian immigration, and Palermitans themselves. Responses here coincide with those

of earlier samples. As in the Zisa sample, lycee students point to the suffocating triangle of mafia, national government, and regional and city governments--with 13, 12, and 11 first place votes, respectively. University students recall the Albergheria sample by isolating the dual menace of mafia and national government (12.5 and 11.5 first place votes, respectively). All university students give immigrants the lowest ranking (fifth or sixth place) of blame. At Ruggero II the overwhelming majority (41 out of 43) assign immigrants the least responsibility and only 1 out of 43 gives them a fourth place and 2 out of 43 give them third places.

These lycee and university students, then, consistently express an explicit antiracism. As much as differences in vocabulary, these politically charged understandings and goals separate them from the Zisa and Albergheria samples. While the majority of those in the working-class sample refuse racial and racist categorizations of "Turks," these highly educated students go beyond this refusal to decry intolerance and racism, to envision a future multiracial Italy in which "immigrants of color" enjoy parity with Italians. Ideas about the hardships endured by foreigners illustrate this distinctive preoccupation with racism and intolerance. All of the university students, for example, describe immigrants as suffering intolerance, marginalization, ghettoization, and racism. As one woman put it, foreign workers are "a world

apart and barely tolerated." Lycee students were more critical yet. The majority (34 out of 43) describe immigrants suffering intolerance and exploitation, and a third (9 out of 34) of those specify racism. (As in the working-class samples, sex in the lycee and university does not correlate with significant differences in attitudes.) The working-class respondents, for their part, also note maltreatment of immigrants, but focus more on economic exploitation. It is not enough to say, as I did above, that race is without significance for lycee and university students. On the contrary, race--and the accompanying complex of related topics such as antiracism, tolerance, and multiracialism--now plays an important and defining role in the political ideology of the majority of educated Italians who are to the left of the neo-Fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI).

3. Views of Immigrants on the Labor Market

This fairly consistent political ideology, broad as it is, also colors interpretations of immigrant participation on the labor market. Whereas working Palermitans typically make contradictory assessments of this participation, lycee and university students see immigrants as simply workers located at the exploited bottom of the occupational hierarchy. Their appraisals of immigrants and "black" work, intolerance, hiring, and consequences for the labor market amount to an interpretation uncomplicated by

ambivalence.

Ruggero II and university students see both immigrants and local poor suffering from the exploitation of "black" work, although a few qualify this by saying that locals' wages drop under the competitive pressure of foreign workers. Benefitting from this state of affairs are employers, according to Ruggero II and university respondents. For the university respondents, mafia and government also benefit. And, as I noted above, most of the people in these samples see immigrants as enduring exploitation and intolerance, with lycee students in particular identifying the problem of Sicilian racism.

These students, like those in the working-class samples, overwhelmingly agree on hiring foreign workers in response to the following question: "If you were an employer, for what reason would you hire or not hire an immigrant?" Thirty-seven out of 43 lycee and 22 out of 25 university students would hire an immigrant, as would 42 out of 50 people in the Zisa sample and 12 out of 14 in the Albergheria sample. But these results do differ from the working-class ones in that many fewer--2 out of 43 and 1 out of 25 at the lycee and university respectively versus 8 out of 50 in Zisa and 2 out of 14 in Albergheria respectively--object to hiring foreigners. Reasons for hiring immigrants differed at the two schools, as well. Of the 37 who would so hire at Ruggero II, 25 would do it because of the qualities of the individual, 11 because they

are better workers, and only one because they are cheaper. Of the 22 university students so disposed, 16 would do so because of the individual qualities of foreigners and 6 because they work for less. By contrast, people in the working-class samples would weigh their decision to hire an immigrant in somewhat more economic terms. The 42 people at Zisa who would hire an immigrant say they would base their decision on the merits of the individuals, 9 on the fact that immigrants work for less, and 5 because they work better than Sicilians. Of the 12 in Albergheria who would hire an immigrant, 3 would do so because of the individual's qualities, 1 because immigrants work for less, and 1 because they are better workers.

Finally, the questionnaire presented two alternative interpretations of the effect of foreign workers on the labor market. While the working-class informants in Zisa and Albergheria split over this question--notwithstanding their willingness to enjoy the benefits of hiring immigrants--the lycee and university ones do not. A majority of 28 out of 38 and 19 out of 24 at Ruggero II and the University, respectively, endorse the view that immigrants have little effect on the labor market because they do jobs refused by local people.

In sum, these lycee and university students consistently interpret foreign workers as the novel, if marginal, bottom of the working class. Immigrants, for them, do the "most humble" jobs refused or abandoned by

Palermitans, cause little disturbance to the labor market, and, like Sicilian poor, find exploitation and little security in the undocumented work so prevalent in this city of abuses. True to their ideological predilection, they tend to see "immigrants of color" and "blacks" as suffering as much from racism as from economic exploitation. Working Palermitans, in contrast, see the "black" work of "Turks" as exploitation which is detrimental to them as well as to the foreigners.

Consistency of interpretation also sets these students apart from the working-class interpretation of immigrant employment, which revealed a deep ambivalence rooted in the dual reality of tenuous job security and the desirability of hiring foreigners. Working Palermitans simultaneously recognize and deny the dual labor market. Because the highly educated students, particularly the elite group at Ruggero II, are implicated not as potential co-workers or competitors but as potential employers of immigrants, they can regard the phenomenon with a certain equanimity. (I will argue below, however, that this consistency does not free this position from its own trademark contradictions.) It would be unthinkable for these bourgeois men and women to go through the gyrations of the working people who, as we saw in the last chapter, struggled when confronted with the contradictions in their accounts of the dual labor market and of Sicilian emigration as compared with current immigration.

On the contrary, more characteristic of well educated Palermitans is the calm detachment of an architect I chanced to encounter at the vacation house of a mutual friend. After a refreshing swim in the turquoise waters off a rocky, protected shore, we climbed up steps cut into the hillside to the cool terrace. There, over pasta and champagne, he asked me about my research, about the effect "immigrants of color" had on the life and jobs of the **popolino**, or "little people." I told him that, in my opinion, the effect was negligible because immigrants had filled the interstices and undermanned sectors of the labor market. He agreed with this assessment and went on to discuss the changing racial composition of Europe (for this immigration affected all of Europe and not just Italy). The inherent tolerance of Sicilians towards foreigners, and the question of racism, also came up:

I can tell you that I am not racist, that it offends my principles, but I cannot say exactly how I would act if my children decided to marry an immigrant. Perhaps you have seen the movie, "Guess Who Is Coming to Dinner?" in which a girl brings home her black boyfriend, to the consternation of her parents. Great movie! More champagne?

4. Of Emigrants and Immigrants

Lycee and university students approach the issues of Sicilian emigration and Third World immigration with the same equanimity and pro-immigrant position that they bring to all other aspects of the immigration question. While people from Albergheria and Zisa characteristically

comprehend the plight of immigrants but maintain that their inferiority makes them incomparable to Sicilian emigrants, these students do not hesitate to equate the experience of the two populations and to draw conclusions about the need for greater immigrant rights and recognition.

Questionnaire results show that lycee and university students view Sicilian emigration in much the same way as do those in the working-class samples. For example, they too describe emigration as compelled by the miserable living and working conditions, the terrible **fame** or "hunger" that haunted so many peasants and urban poor in Sicily and the Italian South up to the very recent past. And, like the Albergheria and Zisa samples, they identify as "miserable" and "most humble" the low-paying jobs in mines, factories, construction, and services which Sicilians performed in the North and abroad.

In their responses to the two questions concerning emigrant experience in the United States and in northern Italy, the university students exhibit their familiarity with the topic. For instance, 14 out of 26 enumerate such problems for Sicilians in the United States as presumed association with the mafia, stigmatization for their origin, competition with other poor groups, and strife with African Americans. Fewer (5 out of 26) describe life there as without difficulty; about the same number (7 out of 26) do not know. Most lycee students (29 out of 43), in contrast, either fail to respond or list do not know. Only

1 out of 43 describes life there as trouble free and 14 out of 43 list such problems as language, reputed association with the mafia, even racism. I will be remembered that the lycee students are of a higher class position than the respondents in the University of Palermo sample.

Both groups of (petite) bourgeois students, like many working Palermitans, portray the situation of emigrants in the North of Italy as one of exploitation and marginality. However, many of the lycee students (27 out of 44), who usually answer questions in dutiful detail, note this but give few examples, while almost all the university students (20 out of 26) draw on their familiarity with emigration to produce a rich account. Indeed, theirs is a veritable litany of indignities suffered by fellow Sicilians in the industrial triangle: marginalization, humiliation, living in barracks, maltreatment as inferior, and--noteworthy with regard to interpretations of current immigration--racism. They also describe low wages and "black" work, dirty and dangerous jobs refused by locals, and accusations of stealing work from local workers. These evaluations of emigrant life are far more negative than those offered by working people. Only one person each at the university and the lycee judge the experience satisfactory, while nearly a quarter so describe it at Zisa (15 out of 55) and Albergheria (3 out of 14).

Interviews in Albergheria revealed a profound resentment of the anti-southernism pervasive in the North.

While I did not interview those in these lycee and University samples on this problem, numerous acquaintances among professionals in Palermo and rural western Sicily permit me to make some generalizations.

These Sicilians, like working Palermitans, resent the all too common caricatures of Southerners as mafiosi, welfare state dependents, and backward. They chafe at the solemn biannual announcement of the Italian statistical agency (ISTAT) that the southern birth rate exceeds the northern one. And, in addition to comments about the corruption of Rome--"the fish starts to stink at the head"--they point to the century-old alliance of national government and northern capital which has worked to draw resources from the South to industrialize the North. For Northerners to disparage as lazy and somehow inferior the Southerners who furnished so much labor power to the factories of the industrial triangle seems, to them, to border on "racism." Especially distressing is the Lega Nord,³ with its alarmist rhetoric about the national state as overtaken by Southerners, the too-fecund South, and its plans to separate the South from the North by means of three large federal states in the place of the current regions. Such steps would constitute the political enactment of a mean-spirited anti-southernism. A well educated Sicilian who spent many years organizing alternative communes in Tuscany once told me of the

3. Formerly the Lega Lombarda.

pervasive disparagement of **terroni** there. Tuscans constantly surprised and offended him with their compliments to the effect that he was certainly a remarkable exception to the rule of the lazy and ignorant Sicilian.

Yet these Sicilian professionals also measure their resentment of the **terrone** stereotype with a realistic, and therefore sad and cynical, appraisal of the Sicilian political and, as it were, immoral economy. While working Palermitans tend to deflect ultimate responsibility for the Sicilian mafia to Rome, these people also point to the undeniable power of the mafia in Sicily where corrupt politicians, common bribery, and disrespect for the institution of the state are rampant. In effect they admit that the Lega is right to denounce the southern politicians who have long channeled state monies for the development of the South to friends and clients. I recall a conversation I had with a priest serving the local and foreign poor in Palermo's old city. He described Sicilians as "parasites" on the industrial North who aim only to "occupy and not produce jobs." Finally I asked if he was a Sicilian himself. He answered yes, and went on to say how current immigrants, like the Sicilian emigrants before them, represent the most productive people of their respective countries, people who leave suffocating political and economic regimes to find better opportunities elsewhere. For him, the northern stereotype of the lazy and dependent

South is sadly accurate, for this described what was left behind.

In particular, many Sicilian professionals and intellectuals deplore the general **degrado**, or "degradation," that debilitates Sicily. **Degrado**, a concept which gained salience during the profusion of critical reform movements of the "Palermo Spring," refers to the sorry ensemble of physical dilapidation, infrastructural disorder, administrative neglect and corruption, as well as to the amoral acquiescence to mafia rule and the widespread attachment to the giant clientelistic food chain linked to government spending. Former mayor Leoluca Orlando encapsulates this critique and the idea of reform when he suggests replacing the "culture of belonging" to party and patrons with the "culture of being" responsible, participating citizens (Settineri and Governali 1990: 76). The North represents, for these Sicilians, not just an oppressor but home to bureaucratic efficiency, participatory democracy, and meritocracy. And yet they see these standards, which they have come to call their own, subverted and mocked on a daily basis. The majority, of course, probably pay lip service to these criticisms and go about their business with vigor. But many whom I met react with bitterness, resignation, cynicism. Some carry on out of necessity; others withdraw from their chosen fields into the security of a minor bureaucratic position untouched by compromise. The recent mafia assassinations of the

successful anti-mafia prosecutors, Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, can only exacerbate this bitterness.

The lycee and university respondents describe many aspects of current immigration in much the same way as respondents of the working-class. According to them, entering Africans and Asians are escaping poverty and oppression, work the jobs abandoned by Palermitans, and endure indifference, intolerance, even racism. But in the highly educated samples, people typically and predictably place individual migration in such broader contexts as global demographic trends, underdevelopment and political repression in the Third World, and the attraction of political freedom and consumerism in the West. At times their answers recall, for me, classroom discussions in graduate school, as with this university woman who sketches the causes of immigration in broad materialist terms:

I do not know a lot about it. But I imagine that they [countries sending migrants] suffer the ravages of the Western economy which expands across the planet, destroying old equilibria, concentrating wealth in small areas, and plundering natural and human resources wherever it can.

Analyzing immigration in relation to global processes of wealth and power, lycee and university students make an explicit comparison or equation of emigration with immigration. In this they mirror the opinions of institutional spokespersons and public officials concerned with immigration with whom they share many similarities in

class experience and education. While working Palermitans grapple with the unresolvable contradictions between their own emigration history and that of Africans and Asians, these students do not hesitate to accept the comparison and to pursue conclusions regarding immigrant rights. It is reflective of this tendency to equate the two migrations that almost a fourth (6 out of 26) of those in the university sample answered the survey question on the causes on immigration by stating that immigrants come "for the same reasons" that Sicilians left.

In a certain sense, then, lycee and university students view immigration through the moral lens of the Sicilian emigrant experience, the "historical memory" that institutional representatives often regard as key for any program of tolerance and acceptance of immigrants. But it is the broader ideological stance of supporting immigration that gives salience to this "memory." I will suggest below that this ideology stems from Italy's strong dual traditions of concern for the oppressed--Catholic universalism and the internationalism of the Left.

Responses to four survey questions eliciting comparisons of the two migrations illustrate the consistently pro-immigrant position of the student samples.

1) The first asks whether immigrants will contribute to Italian development through their labor and culture, or whether they will instead take resources away from Italians. Lycee (33.5 out of 43) and especially university

(23 out of 26) students see immigrants as contributors. (Two out of 26 university students say it depends on future political developments.) In the Zisa sample, in contrast, only a slim majority (27 out of 51) expressed such an optimistic view of potential immigrant contributions, although figures in Albergheria (8.5 out of 12) approximate the other student samples.

2) The second question presents three choices: 1) to support regulated immigration because 27 million Italians emigrated abroad for work in this century, or not to support it because of 2) potential contamination to the white race, or 3) joblessness among Italians. Again, the slim majorities of Zisa (31 out of 55) and Albergheria (7.5 out of 14) which select the first choice pale when compared to the overwhelming support in the lycee (34 out of 42) and university (23 out of 25) samples. Of the latter educated samples, university students once again stand out for championing the cause of immigration: while 8 out of 43 lycee students object to immigration on the grounds of Italian unemployment, only 1 out of 25 university student so objects. (This student, who objects on racial grounds, possibly erred because he does so in contradiction to all his other answers.)

3) The third question asks whether the national government acted responsibly with regard to its own citizens when it passed Law #39 in 1990 (the so-called Martelli law) which legalized many of the foreign workers

already present in Italy. Ruggero II students show a surprising ignorance of the law, with fully three-fourths (33 out of 44) leaving the question blank or saying they did not know. At the school in Zisa, in contrast, only a third (14 out of 51) did not know about the law although the high number of simple "yes" and "no" answers raises doubts about their grasp of its content. (They had heard the law's name from teachers and from my classroom discussions). Notwithstanding their lack of knowledge of the law, lycee and university students again express full support for immigrant rights. All 11 of the lycee students expressing an opinion do so in support of the law. While 18 out of 26 university students support it, and 6 out of 26 admit ignorance, only 2 out of 26 view it as irresponsible. The working-class opinions were more evenly split, with 15 out of 51 and 2.5 out of 11 disapproving, and 22 out of 51 and 4.5 approving, in Zisa and Albergheria respectively.

The popular outrage over the "strike of the immigrants" described in the last chapter (section 7) could not be more at odds with the culture of political protest so important to Italian university life. This radical tradition dates from the early 1960s when education reform legislation more than doubled the student population in Italian universities. Thwarted by inadequate facilities and elitism, sceptical of the postwar Italian economic "miracle," and inspired by communism in China and

elsewhere, Italian university students revolted in 1967-8, giving impetus to subsequent struggles in factories (Ginsborg 1990: 298-309). Although dampened over time, this radical heritage continues to inform political opinion among university students.

4) The fourth and final pertinent question asks if, and how, the historical emigration of Sicilians abroad is comparable to current immigration to Sicily. While the working-class samples, exhibiting their profound and signature ambivalence towards immigrants, see more difference than similarity in the two migrations, these students see more similarity. At Ruggero II, 31 out of 44 support the idea of similarity, which puts the present immigration in a very positive light (versus the 7 out of 44 who do not and the 6 out of 44 who admit ignorance). Among university students, 20 out of 26 support the idea while just 2 out of 26 refute it (and 4 out of 26 plead ignorance). These two groups tend to describe similarity in terms of a push-pull model: poverty inducing people to seek a better life available somewhere else. At the same time, they note such differences as the superior education of current immigrants, and the magnitude and novelty of Third World debt--characteristics that place current immigrants in an even more acceptable position. Indeed, the few who do argue for the dissimilarity of the two migrations do so not to stamp the new immigrants as inferior and ultimately incomparable, as working

Palermitans might. Rather, they point out that immigrants, not emigrants, suffer racism, or that the new immigration has created a novel multiracial situation. One young lycee student, for example, argues the case for dissimilarity this way:

The political, economic, social, and cultural contexts are too different to lump the two movements into a single case...The two movements, however, can be considered similar at the level of human misery, hope, and experience.

Even a dissent on this question can thus reflect a political orientation favorable to immigrant rights.

The results of these survey questions show lycee and university students as overwhelmingly inclined to view immigration with favor. Against the ambivalent and sometimes inconsistent working-class interpretations regarding Africans and Asians, these students consistently support immigrant rights with a sophisticated political ideology which draws on the strong currents of the Left and Catholicism in Italy's political culture. So while working Palermitans tend to see immigrants as inferior because they come from countries without resources, even "without history," these highly educated young people portray immigration as a golden opportunity for the creation of a multiracial Italy. It is to the explanation of this characteristic enthusiasm that I now turn.

5. The Four Paradigms of Immigration

The professional bourgeoisie of Palermo, for which these lycee and university students are exemplary spokespersons, draw on one or more of what I shall call paradigmatic understandings of immigration. I treat four broad tendencies as paradigms, namely those of: religious solidarity, labor solidarity, labor market rationality, and anti-immigration or the new racism. Characteristic understandings, goals, and initiatives define each paradigm, and each is associated with particular intellectual voices and political camps. While I discuss these in more detail in the next chapter on politics, I introduce them here so that I can suggest how and why they resonate with people in the (petite) bourgeois samples.

The paradigm of religious solidarity draws on traditions of universalism in the Catholic church, traditions honed by recent progressive activity in the Third World and in pioneering work with immigrants in Italy. According to this interpretation, immigrants flee poverty and repression at home, take up work refused by Italians, and suffer neglect, even racism. Without a doubt the most important work of the various organs of the church, particularly the Caritàs, has been to offer homeless and or jobless foreigners the food and shelter which local governments usually fail to provide. Proponents of this paradigm exhort Italians to overcome their fear of the Other which underwrites racism and to

embrace immigrants as brothers under God (whatever their religion). Immigration presents itself, then, as a challenge and opportunity for a multiracial society characterized by mutual religious tolerance and intellectual enrichment. Branches of the church and intellectuals also routinely press the government to act on matters of legislation and aid. In Palermo, Caritàs, the Italian Christian Workers Association (ACLI), the Presbyterian church (Chiesa Valdese), and especially the Salesians, prominently articulate this paradigm through their work.

The paradigm of labor solidarity unites various traditions of the Italian Left, linking labor organization at home and the theme of international solidarity abroad to critiques of Third World underdevelopment and capitalism. Left political parties and their cultural organizations, trade union leaders, and associated intellectuals champion this interpretation, which is widely expressed in Italy and Palermo. According to this understanding, a volatile combination of demographic trends, political repression, and national debt drive people from the poor "South" of the world to its rich "North," where they find work at the bottom of the labor market. A cynical acceptance of the exploitation of immigrants, in addition to a general fear of the racial Other, causes intolerance and racism in Italy. Proponents of this paradigm, like those of the preceeding one, vaunt a multiracial Italy, although they

stress immigrants' economic contribution and the goal of secular fraternity. They propose to achieve this goal by passing legislation for immigrant rights, enrolling foreigners in unions, and publicizing the cause of antiracism. In Palermo, the unions, particularly the CGIL (Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro),⁴ and cultural associations such as the ARCI (Associazione Ricreativa Culturale Italiana)⁵ articulate this paradigm. On the other hand, political parties, including, ironically, the former Communist Party, now the PDS, remain silent. Possibly its small size, position of weakness outside of local and regional government, and affiliation in the 1970s with construction concerns involved in mafia corruption (Schneider and Schneider nd: 28) explain the silence of the PDS on immigration.

The third paradigm, that of labor market rationality, finds its influential champions in government and business. According to this view, factors such as Third World debt and population growth work to direct an unremitting stream of potential immigrants towards the rich West. These people represent both a threat, to be controlled by restrictive immigration legislation at home and development programs abroad, and a reserve of cheap and temporary labor, to be utilized as needed. Proponents denounce intolerance as the child of ignorance, bound to lessen in

4. The CGIL is affiliated with the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) and the Socialists (PSI).

5. The ARCI is affiliated with the PDS.

time as the immigrants become assimilated. The law on immigration, which both temporarily closes the border and facilitates the integration of foreign workers already present into the labor force, serves the dual interests of this paradigm's proponents. In the region of Sicily there is as yet no legislation on immigration as required by Law #39. Nevertheless, there is a widespread understanding among Sicilian police and politicians that North Africans on tourist visas are essential to the region's agricultural production.

At some level, all three of these paradigms validate immigrant rights based on the experience of Italian emigration. Catholics would receive foreigners not just out of reciprocal duty but out of Christian love. Unionists would strengthen the working class movement by unionizing foreign workers. And government and business interests would issue a limited number of immigrants the opportunity to live and work in Italy for reasons of labor market efficiency. These arguments, as I noted above, are voiced at the national level, and find a particular resonance among educated Sicilians.

The fourth paradigm, unlike the others, is resolutely anti-immigration. The "leagues" of northern Italy, most notably the successful and clamorous Lega Nord, propose to address immigration by rescinding the rights guaranteed by the 1990 law and by promoting repatriation. Proponents of this paradigm recognize the crushing circumstances driving

immigration, circumstances which constitute a veritable moral call to receive immigrants for many Catholics and Leftists. But like new racists throughout Western Europe, they bridle at foreigners taking work away from nationals, refute the notion of duty to immigrants, and recoil in horror at the thought of racial and ethnic intermingling. This paradigm, like the first two, harkens back to questions of race and racism. For these *leghisti* who loudly claim to be "not racist," immigration (and therefore all who condone it) actually causes intolerance and racism by provoking in Italians a natural urge to protect their ethnicity and territory. The Lega cynically suggests that even immigrants would be better served by repatriation, because it would return them to their natural unit, their own ethnic group or nation. Needless to say, the leagues, which demonize Southerners more than foreigners, claim few adherents in Palermo.

6. Explaining Adherence to Paradigms

Of the preceeding paradigms, the first three dominate in Italy, although the fourth has been gaining substantial ground in the North, as I discuss in the next chapter. The views of lycee and university students in Palermo are particularly informed by the paradigm of labor solidarity, while the bourgeoisie as a whole probably takes as much from ideas about labor market rationality. While I met few Palermitans who ground opinions about race and immigration

in religious thought, proponents of this paradigm contribute beyond their numbers to the debate in Palermo. Finally, whatever their paradigm of choice, not a few invoke the duty of former emigrants to receive current immigrants.

Class and education do, however, influence the enthusiasm for paradigms favorable to immigration and diversity. In Sicily, as in Europe and the United States, people with better jobs and more education typically express more tolerance on race than those with lower-paying jobs and less education (Amodio 1989; Bonifazi and Golini 1989; Van Dijk 1987; Guala 1989; Italia-Razzismo 1990). These people are aware of the norms against racism and, in any case, skilled at presentation of Self and Other in socially acceptable ways. Furthermore, by expressing tolerance, they present themselves as progressive citizens whose enlightenment contrasts favorably with the ignorance (and therefore tendency towards intolerance) of working people (Van Dijk 1987).

The enthusiasm of the lycee and university students for the paradigms of tolerance also reflects Italian political culture. Italian debate on race and immigration distinguishes itself by the dominance of pro-immigrant positions. While political mobilization against foreigners surfaces across Europe, the Church and the Left in Italy have successfully set an agenda in Italy which focuses as much on integrating and respecting immigrants as on

controlling their entry. It is true that decisive action rarely accompanies this rhetoric, and that proponents of antiracism (like Italians in general) can be informed by ambivalent stereotypes of foreigners. As Laura Balbo (1990) argues, a "facile antiracism" amounts to obfuscatory dogmatism. Yet the Italian debate is essentially an optimistic one.

Moreover, adherence to pro-immigrant paradigms, particularly to that of labor solidarity, has become an important and defining feature of membership in self-defined progressive circles. In the classical lycee and university milieux of 1990, such views were *de rigueur*, as the survey data show. And because self-representation is dialectical, such views not only present themselves as views, but also serve to distinguish their adherents from others. Thus students contrast their radical racial politics to the ill-informed and potential intolerance of the working classes, on one hand, and to the smugness and cynicism of the elite who benefit from the class structure and racial antagonism, on the other. (The bourgeoisie as a whole also holds interpretations favorable to immigration, but in less adamant form.) These lycee and university students come to learn and articulate such interpretations in school, through the media (especially the print media), and through participation in the activities of a multitude of political and cultural associations sponsored by the Church, the Left, and organized labor.

In addition to the influences of Italian political culture, certain aspects of Sicilian history and culture also give salience to these broad paradigms. Palermo professionals, particularly members of the cultural elite who most influence the lycee and university students, often base calls to tolerance on the island's multicultural past and on Sicilian emigrant experience. These historical legacies, so to speak, are seen as explaining current tolerance, or as moral precedents worthy of emulation. The symbolic efficacy of such local models explains part of their attraction; their capacity to convey complicated themes in a concise and resonant manner, making them attractive to those who would organize and publicize the cause. Perhaps more importantly, they highlight memorable achievements in Sicilian history and mark Sicilians off from other Italians, whether as descendants of all the cultures and races who crossed the Mediterranean, or as those whose understanding of migration stems from the pain and excitement of the experience itself. Here, too, are claims to the moral superiority of those who suffer unjustly, which I found central to working-class self-representation. According to Allesandro Portelli (1989), southern Italians identify their repression and anger with that of black Americans. He quotes the famous sprinter, Mennea, who proclaimed, "I win the Olympics because I am black." For Portelli this means "I have the same historical rage as black Americans" (Portelli 1989: 96-7). Even among those

Palermitans most cynical about the corruption that destroys their city while making a few rich, it is possible to hear talk of a distinctive Sicilian tolerance which contrasts favorably to northern intolerance and self-satisfaction.

7. Of Contradiction and Consistency

In sum, questionnaire and other data show that lycee and university students regard immigrants in a favorable light. They decry racism and support antiracism; they see immigrants as contributors and not threats; they favor immigrant rights and anticipate a multiracial Italy in which "all are equal." Members of the Palermo bourgeoisie in general also adhere to similar, if much diluted, views. Such views, I suggested, derive from and contribute to nation-wide paradigms, but are also given immediacy by aspects of Sicilian culture and history. Finally, coherence characterizes these interpretations. The status of the paradigms as important themes in political debate, their constant reworking in the face of criticism and new information, and the education and political mobilization of their adherents--all this contributes to their characteristic consistency and sophistication. This systematic point of view, grounded in explicit and political ideologies, approximates Frank Reeves' (1983) concept of "specialized political discourse," in contrast to the "weakly structured" and possibly inconsistent "general discourse" of working Palermitans.

Yet these views, contrastive in their consistency and sophistication to those of working people, are not free of their own characteristic contradictions. This is especially true if I broaden the analysis to include the bourgeoisie as a whole (occasionally Italians as a whole) and introduce data other than questionnaire results. My impressions of the Palermo bourgeoisie in general come from a snowball sample of mostly professional people whom I met through friends and acquaintances. The contradictions which emerge are not so much contradictions internal to paradigms of immigration as they are contradictory and inconsistent ideas and practices. In particular, ideas and practices regarding politics, popular culture, and labor relations illustrate such discrepancies.

The Italia-Razzismo (1990) study of Italian images of immigrants, for example, reveals telling inconsistencies between ideology and understandings. Despite their self-professed egalitarian and "antiracist" ideologies, many in this survey know little and have no curiosity about immigrants. They also attribute a battery of unfavorable qualities to immigrants, including an unrestrained sexual appetite, immaturity, and lack of discipline (Italia-Razzismo 1990: 7-9). The study also reveals Italians to lack clear models for interacting with foreigners.

This discrepancy between rhetoric and action is not confined to the average Italian, however. It also characterizes much political debate. Balbo, in her searing

critique of "facile antiracism," identifies the "declarative" and "romantic" assumptions of much antiracism which serves as the rallying cry of proponents of immigrant rights. Declaration precludes debate by opposing antiracism to its opposite, racism. At the same time, romanticism turns the descriptive phrase multiracial society into a prescription, masking the inequality of actual multiracial social relations (Balbo 1990). The attraction of the common Italian self-representation as inherently tolerant--*italiani, brava gente*--is grounded in Italy's strong tradition of internationalism. People remember the Partisan movement whose contribution to ending Fascism erases or mitigates another memory: Mussolini's invasion and colonization of East and North African, and the surrendering of Jews to the Nazis. The postwar tendency to condemn racial inequality throughout the world from the safety of a fairly homogeneous society also influences contemporary antiracism in Italy (Balbo 1990; Bocca 1988; Portelli 1989).

There is no reason to think that debate in Sicily has surmounted these (and other) obstacles to clear statements of theory and action. Argument by declaration, and a romantic outlook, characterize the slogans of the institutional representatives and well-educated in Palermo. Some recall the periods of Arab and Norman rule 800-1000 years ago as a kind of model and precursor to today's multiracial and multicultural Sicily. In particular they

point to Arab technology and architecture, and to the Normans' even-handed rule over distinct ethnic populations as exemplary. Intellectuals with little experience of emigration also exhort working-class Sicilians to accept immigrants with a good deal more good will than northern Italians have accepted them.

In the meanwhile, Italian popular culture carries images of ethnic and especially racial Others that clash with the rhetoric of multiracial equality (described in Chapter II, section 10). Popular cultural items such as media reports, movies, advertisements, and arcade games represent Others as fundamentally different from Italians. Arabs, for example, are portrayed as untrustworthy and possessed by fanatical Islam, while blacks are seen as both glamorous and savage (Gallini 1989; Leschiutta 1989; Portelli 1989). Because racial stereotypes so often focus on the body, at once the most natural and cultural of objects, ideas about sexuality often accompany them. Immigrant women with whom I spoke in Palermo complained about the Italian stereotype of the sexy and lusty black woman. Theirs are stories of relentless leers and propositions. It is a priest, speaking to a group of Cape Verdian women, who expresses this doctrine most clearly:

You must always be on your guard. When will the devil attack? He knows that you are weak. Perhaps you think that he will attack with regard to sex. But the devil knows you are weak in this regard, that there is little need for him to help you, that you can sin all by yourselves. [quoted in Crisantino 1992: 151]

While it is difficult to assess the extent of racist discourse in Italy, I argue that it does indeed condition interpretations of immigrants among most people. Italians of all classes consume, and are therefore influenced by, these stereotypes which pervade popular culture. They may understand them to be untrue characterizations, but necessary dramatic characters for fiction. They may treat them with irony, as intellectuals do. Or they may create and disseminate them, without a racist thought entering their head. But ultimately these practices tend to perpetuate a symbolic definition of the non-white Other as fundamentally different and inferior. The discussion of popular racist stereotypes bears particularly on the question of bourgeois attitudes to race and immigration because, in contrast to the working class, this class proclaims itself explicitly antiracist.

The symbolic forms of dominance exemplified by this racist discourse show their influence in a dramatic way in actual encounters of dominance and subordination. One example is violence against immigrants, such as the "Moroccan hunt" of Shrove Tuesday of Carnival (1990) in Florence. The attack was carried out by a band of disguised and costumed youth whose actions were encouraged by neo-Fascist agitation and by contemporary political mobilization against immigrant vendors on the part of rich merchants. The violence set off a series of attacks on

non-white foreigners by the "Goebbels brigade" and others. As I discuss in Chapters I and VI, these events catapulted Florence into the heart of a national debate on then-pending immigration legislation and significantly transformed the politics of race in Italy.

Another, more mundane, site of unequal encounters is in labor relations between Italians and the immigrants who are their servants. It is here that the class position of the bourgeoisie and popular stereotypes of the Other show their contradictions most clearly. The dual participation of the bourgeois on the labor market, as both highly remunerated employee and employer, establishes a form of contradictory dominance over the foreign worker, in this case over the Asian and Cape Verdian women who predominate in the domestic labor market. The arrival of these women coincided with the withdrawal of local women from this market. So great was the resulting demand in this sector that some bourgeois families actually sent airline tickets to prospective **colf** in, for example, Mauritius (Crisantino 1992: 33, 35, 133). Now, almost twenty years latter, the presence of foreigners in Palermo has eased this "crisis" considerably. A visit to an agency such as API-COLF will, after a relatively short delay, procure the services of a **colf**.

For Palermo's bourgeoisie, then, immigrants represent not co-workers, competitors, and neighbors, but instead a convenient pool of domestic servants. While working people

see immigrants as threats to their already tenuous security, the well heeled greet them as reliable and useful workers whose presence in the home carries a certain distinction. According to a woman from Madagascar, the convenient relationship explains the atmosphere of tolerance in rich New Palermo. For a small sum, foreign women have made life more comfortable for countless wives and afforded them prestige; furthermore, these workers do not draw attention to themselves, or agitate for greater rights (Crisantino 1992: 21). Filipinos, whose high status and pay relative to other foreign **colf** are based in part on their organization, constitute a partial exception. In this regard it is interesting to note that the leader of the Filipino community prided herself on the distance she had maintained from unions. Unlike "the Africans" and others, she pointed out, the Filipinos neither needed nor sought the attention of unions, but had quietly and efficiently protected their rights. She clearly regarded public protests in bad taste and beneath the "manners" that distinguish Filipinos from other immigrants.

But this tolerance born of convenience as well as of political orientation is not free of contradiction, namely that of saying and doing, between which, the Italian phrase runs, "there lies half the sea." As Teun Van Dijk (1987) and Philomena Essed (1991) have shown, bourgeois behavior often does not measure up to bourgeois expressions of tolerance. My conversations with immigrant women and **colf**

agency officials suggest that in the early days of immigration, not a few Palermitans exploited vulnerable foreign live-in domestics through underpayment, long hours, and refusal to legalize their residency and work status. Some of the women whose stories were collected by Amelia Crisantino report that their employers rarely let them out of the house and treated them as servants only, not as people (e.g., Crisantino 1992: 136-7). A Mauritian women describes the jealousy and possessiveness of such a **padrone** as follows: "The women wanted them [the good foreign domestics] forever, never wanted them to marry, so they would not have to adjust to another women" (Crisantino 1992: 50). But the immigrants with whom I spoke, like those interviewed by Crisantino, rarely complained of "racism," that is, overt discrimination and hostility. Rather, they objected to Sicilian smugness, labor market position, and legal impediments which together confine them to domestic labor, leaving their skills untapped, and limiting their opportunities and contributions.

Gradually, exploitation of foreign domestics became much harder and less common. Legislation granted them legal protections, non-profit agencies such as API-COLF and ACLI-COLF⁶ assumed the role of intermediary, and immigrants themselves came to understand the situation and meet

6. Associazione Professionale Italiana delle Collaboratrice Familiari and Associazione Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani-Collaboratrice Familiari, described in Chapter III (section 8).

Sicilians concerned with their plight. Immigrants also increasingly rented apartments with others, outside of their places of work. The early and successful organization in the Filipino community secured it just compensation and fair conditions. Key figures in the Salesian order in Palermo guided this process by providing encouragement and legal services. The Salesians have continued to promote the organization among different immigrant communities. They are also affiliated with API-COLF, the largest agency for domestic employment in Palermo, which works to gain fair wages and benefits for national and foreign **colf**. The extent of organization achieved by the Filipino community was an important moment in the move to parity for foreign **colf**; unfortunately it remains to be emulated by other groups. As the long time head of the Filipino community told me: "We taught employers about our rights, and not the other way around."

Racist discourse, such as the stereotype of the sexually ravenous black women, can interact with and be charged by much rawer forms of dominance. A high ranking and Sicilian born officer at the American Consulate, who circulates in high society in Palermo, tells of hearing views on race reminiscent of the deep South "a hundred years ago." He reports that among the **alta borghesia** is the ultimate sign of sophistication to be served drinks by a member of another race, preferably wearing white gloves and uniform. And a doctor who works in Albergheria and

lives near the posh via della Liberta contrasts the "true acceptance" of immigrants by working people with the hypocritical rhetoric of the affluent. Workers worry about immigrants threatening their work but accept them easily on an individual basis, as neighbors, for example. Among the bourgeoisie, who profess tolerance loudly, she has heard more than once "hard words" on the subject of sons and daughters dating immigrants.

The hierarchy of domestic workers presents another example of stereotyping. As I described in Chapter III (section 8), the mass of immigrant **colf** fall into a hierarchy of status, pay, and job security. Filipinos, as they themselves are wont to remind observers, enjoy top ranking while Ghanians suffer the lowest. North Africans, for their part, are not solicited and do not solicit domestic employment.

More than one person explained this hierarchy to me in cultural and historical terms. Particularly English colonization, so the theory goes, effectively trained whole populations in obedience to authority and hard work, virtues in the domestic servant. In the case of Sri Lankans, this training makes even the men suitable for employment in the home; they willingly perform their tasks and constitute no threat to the honor of Sicilian husbands, being, as it were, eunuchs by virtue of their profession. In contrast, North Africans, like Sicilians, refuse to submit to authority and are not driven by a work ethic. It

is unclear whether this resulted from improper colonization, endogamous cultural predispositions, or both.

I do not know how much currency these and other characterizations of the relative aptitudes and merits of different immigrant groups hold in New Palermo. But such explanations do illustrate how labor market relations can transform and charge racial and ethnic definitions. These relations do not simply refer to occupation, but rather to the dual relation between the bourgeoisie and workers, and among segments of the working class. Filipinos, for example, have come to enjoy the highest pay and prestige of all foreign workers in Palermo. They achieved this through timely arrival and a cohesive organization which was achieved with help from the Salesian order, as described above. They are probably also prized for their education (many hold university degrees or professional training, especially in the health services) and for what is taken to be their exoticism, blending Oriental submission and Christian rectitude. Now, these Asians who themselves see (or saw) domestic work as humiliating, point with pride to their position, which their community head attributes to superior "manners and culture" (Crisantino 1992: 14).

8. Conclusions

In the course of this chapter, I presented petite) bourgeois interactions and interpretations of African and Asian immigrants in Palermo, and contrasted their views

with those of working Palermitans. Against the often inconsistent, locally informed, ambivalent and stubbornly pessimistic working-class views, the lycee and university students espouse a sophisticated pro-immigration, antiracism position, grounded in certain systematic and universalistic ideologies. As my neighbor in Albergheria reminded me in his description of the "rich cuckolds" who call immigrants "fine" names, representation is dialectical. The bourgeois Palermitan describes himself or herself as the tolerant, enlightened citizen in contrast to the exploited and ignorant denizen of the popular quarter; at the same time the bourgeois interprets immigrants in relation to the desirability of intercultural exchange and the beauty of a multiracial Italy. Working people, for their part, contrast the cheap and self-aggrandizing talk of "fine" people with the competition and hardship immigration brings to their own unrecognized struggles and insecurities; they also contrast their skills and contributions to Italy to the unskilled foreign workers who make unjust but convincing demands on the Italian state.

I explain these divergent views on immigration with reference to broad differences in class experience and consciousness. Tenuous security, class self-hatred, and the bitter recognition of marginality, on the one hand, and empathy borne of the experiences of shared poverty and emigration, on the other, structure the typically

ambivalent working-class interpretations of immigrants. In contrast, the unhesitating enthusiasm of the lycee and university students for paradigms favorable to immigrant rights and recognition stems from a certain equanimity born of relatively secure class position, knowledge of acceptable views on race transmitted through higher education, membership in self-styled progressive circles in a national political culture dominated by the rhetoric of antiracism, as well as aspects of local culture and history deemed pertinent to these paradigms. As regards the form of these divergent views, little education and the lack of access to influential public discourse undermine the consistency of working peoples' opinions. Among the lycee and university students, by contrast, higher education, familiarity with paradigmatic interpretations of immigration in particular, and political discourse in general, all contribute to the signature consistency and sophistication of expression.

However, I found the bourgeois position beset by its own contradictions and inconsistencies. This became clear as I broadened my unit of analysis from the student samples to the bourgeoisie in general, drawing on impressions based on friendships and acquaintances among professionals, and as I introduced other evidence from Italian politics, popular culture, and the local market for domestic labor. In a sense, this analytical adjustment disrupted the rhythm of a simple, almost predictable line of argument based on the

neat samples as such. The category (petite) bourgeoisie, for example, groups together people in possession of power and money as well as education (which united the two school samples of different backgrounds). As a group, the bourgeoisie probably supports the paradigm of labor market rationality--and then with much less ardor than the students express for the paradigm of (multicultural) labor solidarity.

By broadening the framework of analysis, I was able to show several telling inconsistencies in the bourgeois position on race and immigration. Of course, the characteristic lethargy of Italian politics--with which this class is associated--results in the abandonment of most initiatives favorable to immigrants. More important is a dogmatic antiracism which stifles debate through preemptive claims of Italian racism. Americans who have lived and studied in Italy over the past decades note how many Italian intellectual friends have suddenly dropped the habit of criticizing race relations in the United States. In the meanwhile, however, this self-satisfaction cannot but have influenced general bourgeois opinion, particularly in Palermo, where the Sicilian emigrant experience and multicultural past provide attractive models and explanations for Sicilian tolerance.

As I have shown, a number of racial stereotypes from Italian popular culture also contradict bourgeois ideologies of antiracism. In Palermo, ideas about the

relative aptitudes of various immigrant groups arise in the power-laden interaction of stereotype and labor market. Paradoxically, Palermitans who live and work with, even hire, "Turks" check their identification with them through claims of Sicilian superiority, while those who seek the distinction of being served by foreign **colf** proclaim the benefits of a multiracial Italy.

The contradictory bourgeois interpretation of immigrants in Palermo, then, pits tolerance and antiracist ideology against stereotypes honed in relations of dominance as in the labor market for domestic workers. Writers concerned with white racism concentrate on institutional racism as an expression of fundamental racial inequality, or on working-class racism as a manifestation of workers' powerlessness under capitalism and within nation-states. But they seldom address bourgeois attitudes to race. No doubt this neglect reflects the statistically verifiable tolerance of the bourgeois class. The few who do address it, such as Van Dijk, read this tolerance as a rhetorical facade behind which this class (particularly members of the media and political elite) perpetuate the racial antagonism and domination which shores up white Western power (Van Dijk 1987: 360-1). But this characterization, although occasionally accurate, endows the class with unrealistic intention, unity, and cynicism. Its functionalism also conflates effect with cause, and fails to account for political ideologies of antiracism

which are so strong in Italy. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say, following Immanuel Wallerstein (1991), that there exists under capitalism an enduring ideological contradiction between "universalism" and "racism" (and sexism). Universalist ideologies of equality and meritocracy accompany and feed the homogenizing process of commoditization, while the ranking and naturalizing of large parts of the work force permit their reproduction and exploitation.

I am suggesting that the explanation for contradictory bourgeois attitudes and behaviors lies in class experience and consciousness, broadly conceived. The relationship of this class to workers, foreign and national, is one of dominance, legitimated and celebrated by the ideology of capitalism. Explicit racist ideology could conceivably justify the exploitation of foreign workers, but its adoption is untenable given the efficacy of capitalist thought and the infamy attached to racism. As Reeves (1983) has noted, capitalist justifications of class inequality can work to shore up racial inequality independent of racism. On the other hand, the racial and ethnic categorization of immigrant labor does provide what Wallerstein calls a "non-meritocratic basis" for inequality. This is why members of the Palermo bourgeoisie regard immigrant participation on the labor market with an equanimity that contrasts with working-class emotion. Immigrants, it is true, provide this class with reliable,

even fashionable, household staff; but, at the same time, they form but another, if novel, segment of the working class whose subordination and demerit underline bourgeois dominance and merit in general. For this reason, too, bourgeois worries about immigration are confined to the overall problem of regulating the presence and flow of immigrants into the country and labor market--the paradigm of labor market rationality. While working Palermitans fear their state will receive and care for foreigners to the detriment of services earmarked for them, while they latch on to nationalist ideologies, the bourgeoisie calmly receive the resources of a dependable labor supply. At the same time, bourgeois self-definition as enlightened and democratic citizens, together with access to politics and familiarity with Italian debate on race, all stoke enthusiasm for ideologies of tolerance. It is to the creation, articulation, and contestation of these ideologies in Palermo and Italy that I now turn.

Chapter VI

Emigrants and Immigrants: The Politics of Race and Immigration in the Italian North and South

A few days before I left Sicily for home a priest and local scholar introduced me to several historians from the University of Palermo. They listened intently as my friend described my research on Sicilian reactions to Africans and Asians in Palermo. As he finished, one professor took me aside and asked with noticeable anticipation whether I had found Sicilians racist. When I replied that on the contrary most expressed tolerance or apathy despite worries about competition for jobs and services, she wheeled around to the group and exclaimed, "I knew it! We can't be racist because we've been emigrants for so long!"

These remarks, coming from a student of historical process, suggest the prevalence of ideas about Sicilian tolerance among Palermo's intelligentsia. In this view, elaborated and disseminated by many representatives of churches, unions, and cultural and political associations, Sicily's position at the crossroads of Mediterranean history and above all the experience of nearly a century of emigration explain the acceptance of immigrants there--or should justify it. At the same time this model contrasts the tolerance of the Italian South with the intolerance of the North. The historian was in fact suggesting, somewhat optimistically, that the experience of stigmatization and

marginalization endured by Sicilian emigrants, particularly in the North of Italy, necessarily fosters the compassionate understanding for immigrants rather than a mean-spirited insistence that they too should suffer as did Sicilians. Her position further suggests that a fundamental intolerance of the northern Italian character explains current anti-immigrant violence and political mobilization there. This eagerness to compare oneself with the North, to address and avenge unjust treatment and characterizations, is an example of the on-going Sicilian reaction to anti-southernism in Italian politics and culture. During the course of my fieldwork, Sicilians would often point to anti-immigrant violence in the North, as exemplified by the beatings and protests in Florence (described at the beginning of Chapter I), as evidence of northern intolerance.

In this chapter I shall use the Sicilian thesis as the starting point for an investigation of regional differences in anti-immigrant violence and politics. I argue that the image of an intolerant North stems from a particular form of violence and political mobilization. While anti-immigrant violence and exploitation in fact occur throughout Italy, such brutality is characterized by the intimidation of labor in the South and by politicized neo-Nazi and skinhead beatings in the North. Political mobilizations against immigrant integration and rights moreover are concentrated in the North. I suggest that

these trends might be explained with reference to broad regional differences in culture and political economy. The apolitical southern reaction stems in part from compassion born of the emigrant experience, as the Sicilian thesis somewhat optimistically would have it, but also from a clientelistic political system that thwarts political expression of any kind. Politicized northern reactions derive, on the other hand, from previous experience with southern immigration and a sense of crisis promoted by strong regionalist movements, who phrase their objections to immigrants in opposition to a strong antiracist lobby in the North. In particular I suggest that the Carnival in Florence signalled the formation of new racist politics in Italy.

1. Institutions and Associations

In contrast to working Palermitans, the local intelligentsia and many members of the bourgeoisie draw on aspects of Sicilian experience to formulate explicit moral and political models for immigrant-Sicilian relations. This affinity for paradigmatic understandings of immigration and racism signals, among other things, the greater familiarity with political ideologies and higher education enjoyed by the bourgeoisie, as I discussed in the last chapter. It also points to the formative role of the institutions¹ and associations that create and publicize

1. I use institution to refer to formations of historical

these paradigms.

Before addressing the question of the regional variation of the politics of race and immigration, I shall first discuss the Palermo institutions and associations that formulate and disseminate these interpretations through their debate and initiatives. These churches, unions, and other associations mediate between immigrants, government, and the public, establishing interpretive and practical frameworks for addressing the issues of immigration and racism. In contrast to comparable elites in Holland (Van Dijk 1987), Britain (Hartman and Husbands 1974; CCCS 1982; Reeves 1983), and France (Grillo 1985), political and intellectual elites in Italy tend to avoid negative depictions of immigration. (The Catholic Church has taken a pro-immigrant position everywhere.) The Palermo institutions and associations, for example, portray immigration as both problem and opportunity, as I described in Chapter II (section 9). The marginalization of foreign workers, and the potential for competition with local poor, pose significant worries. At the same time, a new multicultural and multiracial Italy brought about through the dignified integration of immigrants is anticipated. In particular the institutions and associations give resonance to abstractions about diversity by evoking key aspects of Sicilian history.

and cultural significance such as orders of the Catholic Church or trade unions.

Much early institutional and associational activity in Italy was characterized by a heady optimism or "facile antiracism" that stifled debate through a simplistic and idealistic adherence to the principles of diversity (Balbo 1989, 1990). The paradigms of solidarity developed by Sicilian churches, unions, and associations, as I show below, do in fact bear this imprint. But institutions and associations have increasingly concentrated their energies on creating structures to assist immigrants materially and to facilitate their integration. Even from the start of the national debate on immigration in the mid-1980s, union leaders and Catholic and Protestant Church spokesmen criticized the government's contradictory stance. They pointed out how the Italian state, by allowing immigration while at the same time declaring it illegal, in effect created a foreign population deprived of basic rights and services and vulnerable to exploitation by Italian employers. In addition to pressure from the European Community partners anxious to unify immigration and refugee policy in anticipation of European Community integration beginning in 1992, Italian institutions and associations played a key role in the legislative change that produced Law #39 in 1990 (see Chapter II, sections 7 and 9).

The "Martelli law" exemplifies the paradigm of labor market solidarity in which the state manages the resource of foreign labor. It facilitates the legal absorption of immigrants at the same time that it closes borders until

further laborers are deemed necessary. In this capital-friendly model, the state acts to ensure the rational allocation of labor to capital. But by ceding jobs and services to immigrants, it also runs the political risk of enraging jobless Italians and inviting attacks by anti-immigrant entrepreneurs such as the Lega Nord² and the neo-Fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI). Because the management of immigration is by definition a state concern, the state is the natural arena for the development of this paradigm.³

At the time of my fieldwork, then, the "Martelli law" was debated, passed, and implemented. The law, particularly after it was amended to close Italian borders, enjoyed unusual bipartisan support in Parliament and gave many Italians the sense that a crisis had been addressed satisfactorily (Balbo 1990: 26-7). It was in this administrative context, in addition to that of the discovery of immigration and the threat of racism, that the churches, unions, and associations were active. I group discussion of Palermo institutions into the three broad categories of church, union, and cultural and political

2. Formerly the Lega Lombarda.

3. My description is consistent with the government's own. In a 1992 lecture at The Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America at Columbia University, Minister of Emigration and Immigration Margherita Boniver plainly stated the state's goals and methods of managing immigration as a labor resource. As a sign of success, she noted that as of 1992 there are 700,000 legal immigrants compared to 200,000 illegal ones; and that these documented workers are needed since 60% of the permits issued in 1990 have been reissued.

association. These categories are not always mutually exclusive--for example there are various Christian unions and **colf** agencies--but they do reflect the general division of labor in Italy among institutions and associations dealing with immigration. Here churches excel at providing **prima accoglienza** ("temporary food and shelter"), unions call for enforcement of labor laws and enroll foreigners in their ranks, and associations publicize antiracism and multiculturalism. All press for legislation, funding, and action generally from all levels of government.

Churches, unions, and associations typically espouse one or more of the paradigms of immigration discussed in the last chapter (section 5), especially those of religious and labor solidarity. As a rule, they cultivate a certain comparative understanding of the causes of immigration, working and living conditions of foreigners, government action, and Italian-foreigner relations. Based on these findings and their own broad political beliefs, they propose short-term solutions and cast long-term goals. Like the politicians with whom they so often deal, the representatives of institutions tend to exemplify Frank Reeves' (1983) notion of a "specialized political discourse." That is, the language they produce has a characteristic internal coherence and sophistication, and relates to explicit political ideologies. I will illustrate this first in relation to churches, then to unions and associations.

2. Christ as a Foreigner

Until the 1990 law afforded many immigrants a measure of legal protection and security, no other institution in Italy did so much to relieve the daily misery of immigrants as the Catholic Church. In Rome, for example, the worldwide charitable organization Caritàs offered assistance to immigrants early on and conducted some of the first studies (e.g., Caritàs 1985, Caritàs diocesana and SIARES 1989, SIARES 1988). Indeed, Caritàs has been active worldwide with immigrants and refugees; in Barcelona, for example it has aided immigrants and conducted studies (e.g., Pereda, Pereda, and colectivo IOE 1987).

In Palermo too the Catholic Church has outshone other institutions in its work with immigrants. The Salesian Oratory Santa Chiara hosts a variety of immigrant initiatives including a Tamil school. Founded in 1990, the school offers instruction in Tamil, English, and Italian. The founders reason that by keeping their children abreast of the Sri Lankan curriculum the students will be able to resume studies without difficulty when their families return to Sri Lanka after the civil war. At the dedication ceremony, a Sicilian woman emphasized that Sicilians have duty towards the immigrants because in Sicilian emigrant communities have asked and still ask for much assistance from their hosts abroad. In 1987, volunteers from the University of Palermo Medical School, aided by funds from the city, established the Social-Medical Center for

immigrants described in Chapter III (section 8). Don Naselli, Salesian coordinator for immigrant programs, arranges masses in foreign languages and prodded the Filipinos into their singular organizational fitness. He also pushed for the establishment of a Palermo section of API-COLF, by far the largest employment service for domestic workers in the city. Caritàs opened a large "polyfunctional" center for immigrants late in 1990. And the Presbyterian Church (Chiesa Valdese), aside from its representative function on the Regional Council (Consulta Regionale) on immigration, helps immigrants find work, submit papers for residency and work permits, and receive language training through its Centro Immigrazione (Immigration Center). In an interview, a pastor explained that, although they were not actively seeking to convert, they were concerned about Protestant immigrants having their faith compromised by the more aggressive Catholic Church. By way of example, he related how a Catholic cardinal had insisted on conducting the funeral of Jerry Masslo, the South African man who was murdered in Caserta (near Naples) in 1989, even though the man was Protestant and a representative of his faith as ready to perform the service.

Such initiatives are not restricted to Palermo and other cities with large immigrant populations such as Catania and Mazara. In rural western Sicily, Caritàs of Salemi restored part of an old convent in 1990 for **prima**

accoglienza, with the assistance of religious organizations from Mazara del Vallo and Palermo and with youth from all of Italy. In nearby Alcamo in the same year, a missionary temporarily home from Africa established the Centro Accoglienza Terzomondiali (Third World Welcome Center) with the help of local volunteers and national organizations.

The wide-ranging work of these religious orders and churches, like the work of most other institutions, is aimed at three audiences: immigrants, public, and government. For, in addition to aiding and organizing immigrants, they seek to prompt government action and promote public tolerance. They do this by advising on legislation as members of the Regional Council on immigration, by conducting studies, and holding conferences.

Despite differences in emphasis, resources, and sophistication, church programs reflect a broad and coherent understanding of immigration that I call the paradigm of religious solidarity. Christian love and charity stand at the heart of this ideology, as I was reminded during Easter service at a parish church in Albergheria. The priest called for contributions for the Oratory Santa Chiara to aid "our brothers the immigrants of color." We placed money in an envelope stamped: Cristo è morto per riconciliarci col Padre e fra noi/un'OFFERTA DI SOLIDARIETÀ PER I NOSTRI FRATELLI IMMIGRATI ("Christ died that we might return to the Father and make peace among

ourselves/AN OFFER OF SOLIDARITY FOR OUR IMMIGRANT BROTHERS"). Indeed for some, immigrants conjure up the image of Christ himself. The missionary in Alcamo echoed the Pope when he noted that Christ too was a foreigner.⁴ Ecumenical in tone, this message of Christian love does not seek to convert but rather respects all religions as so many expressions of God as well as cultural diversity.

Christian love, religious tolerance, and the dignified integration of immigrants into a multicultural Italy underpin the paradigm of religious solidarity. Church leaders bring these tenets to their understanding of immigration, from the question of its causes to the nature of integration. The representatives with whom I spoke describe immigration as both a problem and an opportunity. Third World debt and demographic crises, the prospect of continued mass immigration and marginality, and the specter of European racism all constitute problems the West ignores at its peril. At the same time, the religious and cultural exchange brought by immigration provide a rich and novel opportunity to mold a new Italy. On balance church representatives see more opportunity than peril.

It is often through invocations of Sicilian history and culture that churches make more evocative their general calls for tolerance. Some representatives, for example,

4. For a theological statement of this theme see the special edition of *Servitium* (1991) whose title, *Ero Straniero*, recalls Christ's Sermon on the Mount: "I was a foreigner and you took me in...."

explain Sicilian tolerance (as opposed to northern intolerance) with reference to the island's multicultural past, which links it to North Africa and to the experience of emigration. "We're almost Oriental in our disposition to hospitality," said Don Mele of Santa Chiara; moreover, he continued, Sicilians in contrast to Northerners understand people who must move to earn their bread. This idea takes on a spatial expression at the Presbyterian Church, where the Centro Immigrazione is replacing ASEF (Associazione Siciliana Emigrati e Famiglia/ Sicilian Association of Emigrants and Their Families), the Church's association dedicated to assisting Sicilian emigrants. The statement of intent of the Alcamo Centro Accoglienza Terzomondiali neatly integrates the themes of a Sicilian model for tolerance and integration:

The presence of immigrant citizens and workers, in addition to constituting a real and objective problem for our society, also can and must be an opportunity for cultural and social enrichment in an area like our own--Sicily--which has always been throughout history a crossroads of diverse cultures and which has known, even in the recent past, the drama of emigration of necessity. [Centro Accoglienza Terzomondiali 1990]

Cases of Sicilian indifference and exploitation of foreigners are all the more disappointing for many church representatives because they betray precisely a lack of what they call the "historical memory" of emigration. When I asked Padre Lombardo of the Alcamo center if Sicilians actually recognize their emigrant past in current

immigration he replied, "no and that's the ugly part of it." He said that rather than express tolerance out of historical understanding, many in Alcamo express a "classism" in which they denigrate the very laborers on whose backs they live. It is this sense of superiority and indifference that Padre Lombardo and others seek to replace with a forward looking multiculturalism that draws not only on Christianity but the strengths of Sicily's past.

3. Safeguarding the Rights of Workers Domestic and Foreign

Unions in Italy have played an important if not key role in calling attention to immigration and prompting the government to examine and regulate the phenomenon.

Churches work to alleviate suffering and promote religious dialogue (critics would say monologue). Unions, for their part, focus on the labor market: the effect of often undocumented foreign workers on indigenous workers, strategies to protect the gains of Italian unions through immigration legislation, and the unionization of foreigners. Indeed, it is Italy's three principal unions that have done the most to make immigration a serious political issue. This triumvirate consists of the CGIL (Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro) associated with the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS)⁵ and the Socialists (PSI); the CISL (Confederazione Italiana dei Sindacati Liberi) associated with the Christian Democrats

5. Formerly the Italian Communist Party (PCI).

(DC); and the UIL (Unione Italiana del Lavoro) associated with the PSI, the Social Democrats (PSDI), and the Republicans (PRI). Like churches, unions treat the question of immigration in many ways through various local branches, bureaucratic levels and divisions, and study centers.

In Palermo as in Italy generally, CGIL officials are the most involved in questions of immigration. This union established a center for foreign workers in 1986 within its section for union unemployed, and provides 400 foreign workers with employment information and occasional language and training courses. In late 1990 it initiated local meetings where foreign and Sicilian union members could meet. The CGIL also brings immigration to public attention through conferences (CGIL 1979), books (e.g., Slama 1986), and protest. It organized the November 1990 march to protest the poor conditions of immigrants under the title "Rights Have No Color" which so disturbed working Palermitans (see Chapter IV, section 7).

Like the CISL and the UIL, the CGIL helped countless immigrants to register for legal status in the first half of 1990. And like the other unions its representatives sit on the Regional Council for immigration legislation. The CISL enrolls a small number of foreign workers, mostly in its service workers' section. Meanwhile, the UIL entrusts its representation to ARIF (Associazione Regionale degli Immigrati e Famiglie/ Regional Association of Immigrants

and Their Families) which calls for immigrants' rights through conferences (e.g., UIL 1988), publications (e.g., ITAL-UIL 1989), and protests. In 1990 the Palermo police announced an investigation into the sale by ARIF staff of false documentation to immigrants registering for legal status (*Giornale di Sicilia* 17, 18, 19 October 1990).

Finally, two associations of religious orientation merit attention here because they principally function as unions for foreign workers. ACLI (Associazione Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani/ Christian Association of Italian Workers) has long experience safeguarding the rights of Italians working at home and particularly abroad; it also forms part of the Regional Council. Its Centro La Speranza (Hope Center) and ACLI-COLF provide medical care, **colf** employment services, and other assistance to local poor and immigrants. The Palermo branch of API-COLF (Associazione Professionale Italiana Collaboratrici Familiari/ Professional Association of Italian Family Collaborators) serves as an employment and training center for foreign and domestic **colf**, affords legal services, and promotes the image and "spirituality" of the **colf**. While both associations are Catholic in inspiration, their staff focus on employment and few of the many foreigners who frequent them enroll in the associations.⁶

Much like churches, unions view immigration as an

6. API-COLF and ACLI-COLF/Centro La Speranza were also described in Chapter III, section 8.

expression of global inequality, decry the racist exploitation and denigration of foreign workers, call for civil tolerance and the granting of immigrant rights, and envision a multicultural Italy in which immigrants enjoy equal rights with Italians while preserving their cultures. And like churches they portray immigration as more resource than problem.

The ideological bedrock of the unions' paradigm of labor solidarity is the notion of the rights of labor to fair compensation, benefits, dignity, and representation. (This is allied, particularly in the democratic welfare state of Italy, to the notion of the rights of citizenship.) As Ottaviano Del Turco, assistant secretary general of the CGIL noted in a round table discussion, immigrant participation in the labor market is the "real point," lost, at times, in fuller discussions of tolerance and race relations (Pasquino 1989: 24). By calling for parity between Italians and foreigners, unions propose to move foreign workers out of a state of illegality (*clandestinità*), underwrite their dignity, and vouchsafe Italian jobs and the gains of the labor movement.

Unions propose to effect parity principally through government or regulatory actions. On the home front this includes laws and policies to coordinate the entry of immigrants with the needs of the labor market, and the enforcement of labor laws. Also of concern is the development of strategies and accords with countries of

immigration abroad. Of course unions also seek to enroll foreign workers and to shape public opinion, but their proposals tend to tack back to government as is illustrated by the Coordinamento Palermitano Contro il Razzismo e per l'Integrazione (Palermo Coalition Against Racism and For Integration). The group's 29 March 1990 platform, which was drafted primarily by CGIL representatives, consists of a list of separate demands for city and provincial government, regional government, and the national Parliament.

In Palermo, union discourse on solidarity and racism often employs aspects of the Sicilian experience to sharpen calls for tolerance, based on the broader principles of the rights of labor and citizens. Some see multicultural history and the defining experience of emigration underwriting tolerance, while many others would use these themes as the moral and rhetorical fulcrum of labor solidarity. Late in 1990, for example, the CGIL scheduled a series of "assemblies" in which foreign and Sicilian workers would meet. A guiding idea behind these encounters was the notion of the duty of former emigrants to current immigrants. Union representatives also attempt to correct the misgivings of Sicilian workers, reassuring them that immigrants do not compete directly for jobs but instead take what is refused by locals, with the exception of some agricultural day labor in the interior areas. They reinforce the notion of real or proposed Sicilian tolerance

by drawing attention to northern intolerance. As a CISL representative told me, Sicilians cannot be racists since "it is the Northerners who call us Africans."

Union representatives do not agree on rank and file views on immigration: some hear grumbling, others see indifference alternating with compassion for the immigrants, still others describe a veritable "solidarity of the poor," in contrast to bourgeois hypocrisy. They see little competition on the labor market between foreign and local workers, and recall few examples of conflict. But they remember that most aspects of immigration, from employment to taxes to services, impinge or appear to impinge on the security of their constituents.

Unions typically portray immigrant rights as a means of both shielding foreigners from exploitation and protecting Italian jobs and wages. But it is not always possible or politically wise to attempt to reconcile the interests of two, at times competing, groups. A CGIL representative alluded to this when he told me, "we must have the courage to be unpopular [with our rank and file] when we support immigrant rights." The extent to which union practice fails to live up to the courageous rhetoric of labor solidarity illustrates the dilemma the CGIL, CISL, and UIL face.

4. Collaborating on the Project of a Multicultural Italy

Associations form the third and final category of organization that contribute significantly to debate on immigration and racism. While "association" describes a specific legal status in Italy, I use the term loosely to group a variety of true associations, groups, and centers varying in size, influence, and affiliation that are united by their commitment to cultural and political criticism. Associations, like unions, tend to express the paradigm of labor solidarity. They also play an important role in shaping government policy. A core of associations such as ARCI and Italia-Razzismo, for example, organized the massive 7 October 1989 demonstration for the prompt enactment of immigration legislation. They also sponsored the First Annual National Antiracism Conference (8-10 December 1989) in Florence, where statements on the rights of women, children, immigrants, students, and prisoners were drafted (see Bassetti 1990: 87-95).

In Palermo as in Italy from the late 1980s many associations either turned some of their attention to immigration or constituted themselves around it. ARCI (Associazione Ricreativa Culturale Italiana/ Italian Recreational and Cultural Association), the influential national organization affiliated with the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) and the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), opened offices throughout Italy for an organization staffed by foreigners and called CISM-Coordinamento Immigrati Sud

del Mondo (Coalition for Immigrants from the South of the World). Its Palermo office works with government, other institutions, and immigrant groups to promote immigrant rights and multiculturalism. It also sponsors and takes part in conferences, debates, and cultural events such as the annual Festa dell'Unità. The Centro Informazione Sud-Sud (CISS-South-to-South Information Center), informally allied to Proletarian Democracy (DP), which is to the left of PDS, also publicizes the immigrant cause through conferences and study; like most organizations, it called for government action as a participant in the Palermo Coalition.

The Unione Siciliana Emigrati e Famiglie (USEF-Sicilian Union of Emigrants and Their families) is an example of an organization formerly dedicated to emigration which now concerns itself with immigration. This organization was established in the 1970s by the major parties in the regional government but is now independent. International in scope, it publishes a magazine from its Rome office and a newsletter out of Palermo. In the words of its director, USEF concentrates on making immigrants "active subjects" by facilitating their organization (it works mostly with Mauritians and Eritreans) and by pressing the region of Sicily for greater immigrants' rights. The right to the vote in local elections is considered key among its efforts.

Ellai Illai (meaning "For a World without Frontiers")

in Tamil) and the Meeting del Mediterraneo in Catania exemplify those associations for whom immigration constitutes the very reason d'être. The Meeting promotes religious dialogue between Islam and Christianity, and has conducted research on immigrants (e.g., Scidà 1990). Ellai Illai, centered in the Oratory Santa Chiara and working primarily but not exclusively with the Tamil community, initiated language courses, a newsletter, cultural fairs, and a multi-ethnic restaurant in 1990.

Overall, immigrant groups have been slow to form, fast to dissolve. As an immigrant woman told me, immigrants tend to neglect the long-term, collective goal of organization with the own short-term, individual interests such as consuming Western products. The Filipino, Mauritian, and Tamil communities present partial exceptions. The Filipino community first organized itself in 1979, as it sought to protect the rights of the Filipino **colf** in Palermo. While it is linked to a national association with elected representatives, its organization in Palermo currently is informal in nature, centering around religious attendance at the Catholic Church activities and social events. The community head, who has served since its inception, reports that fellow Filipinos no longer bother to elect her; they simply come to her when a problem arises. According to a representative at ARCI, the Mauritian organization, the Associazione Mauriziana Immigrati Palermo (AMIP), is the most recent of a series of

rapidly constituting and dissolving Mauritian organizations. The sports fair it held in September 1990, however, was efficiently run--more American in character than Italian--and was also attended by Ghanians, Cape Verdians, and Sri Lankans. Sri Lankans, who have only recently arrived in Palermo, have created the Coordinamento Tamil and established the Tamil school in the Oratory Santa Chiara described above. I noted little formal organizational activity for other immigrant groups. Cape Verdians, many of whom have been in Palermo for decades, have an informal network (Crisantino 1992). I heard little of an association for North Africans (UINA). Rather, many North Africans had gone to the Associazione Regionale degli Immigrati e Famiglie (associated with the union UIL) to receive help in registering with police. As I was leaving Palermo in late 1990, ARIF was under police investigation for selling false documentation. There are also several associations for Islamic culture generally, such as the Istituto per la Diffusione della Cultura Araba e Siciliana and Al Farabi. It remains to be seen if North Africans and other Muslim immigrants such as the Senegalese will form a community around the mosque that was established in late 1990. A new association, the Associazione Culturale Islamica, was established to run the mosque and serve as an umbrella organization for Muslims in Palermo (L'Ora 7 November 1990).

Immigrant-focused associations in Sicily, like their

numerous counterparts throughout the country, typically endorse the paradigm of labor solidarity. They too situate immigration in a global context, denounce racism and exploitation, and call for immigrant rights and diversity. Because their members come from the Left of Italian political culture they, like unions, hold as central the fundamental rights of foreigners as workers and citizens. Perhaps more than unions, they stress that rights should extend to all as citizens of the world. Unions are not ignorant that rights gained primarily through documented employment are often lost or curtailed by virtue of undocumented employment, but their frame of reference is usually national rather than global (see the comments CGIL official Fausto Bertinotti in Pasquino 1989: 34-5). Moreover, unlike both churches and unions, associations do not confront the daily problems of **extracomunitari**--health, housing, work, maltreatment by the authorities--but rather focus on studying, organizing, and promoting immigration issues. As a result their discourse tends to be more radical and abstract than that of others, their plans and visions more sweeping. More than other institutions they identify racism as the main problem faced by foreigners, portray the foreign presence as a resource in every way, and propose the collaborative construction a new Italy enriched by diversity and equality.

For example, Senzaconfine (Without Borders), an association founded in Rome in 1989, calls itself a "place

of multicolored encounter." In its commitment to immigrant rights it sees itself as contributing "to the solution of the great problems which bear on the relationship of the countries of the South to the countries of the North of the world; on peace, nonviolence, disarmament (even unilateral); and on a new conception of [our] relations with nature and the environment" (**Senzaconfine** 1989: 2).

The aims of Ellai Illai in Palermo are somewhat more modest. A group of young Sicilians with experience teaching Italian at the Oratory Santa Chiara and with expertise in leftist organization and politics founded the association in the summer of 1990. Like other "independent" groups, Ellai Illai declares itself affiliated with neither party nor sect. It aims through cultural and recreational activities to promote "the integration, on all levels, of **extracomunitari**...in Italy, with respect to their cultures; [and] their acquisition of the economic, social, political, and cultural tools necessary to a free and dignified existence" (Ellai Illai 1990: 5). The association stresses the collaborative nature of its endeavor: one of the founders told me their object was to "plan together" with immigrants and not for them. Because of work schedules, education, and training in Italian political culture, however, the Sicilians tend to formulate policy and then consult Tamils and others. On one occasion I participated in a meeting on a proposed newsletter. The leader sternly criticized my suggestion

that a page set aside for Tamils appear in English. Against my observation that educated Sri Lankans read and are proud to be able to write in English (a language furthermore intelligible to other immigrants), he held up the importance of the page appearing in Tamil for their cultural dignity and authenticity. On the whole Ellai Illai accomplished a lot during its first half year of activity, perhaps because of the organizational skills of its members. Its cultural fairs were successes, its language courses well attended, and the trial run of an ethnic restaurant drew a full house of Palermo's progressive set.

Like the discourse of churches and unions, that of associations draws on Sicilian culture and emigration to explain and call for tolerance. At CISS I was told how shared poverty and aspects of Sicilian culture, rather than some intellectual notion of cultural exchange, lay behind the daily reciprocities of goods and services between local poor and "immigrants of color." The director of USEF ticked off the names of Sicilian towns and cities such as Canicatti, Niscemi, Ribera, and Mazara del Vallo characterized by sizable past emigration and current immigration. He maintained that quick and responsible negotiations of politicians, unions, and church agencies in these places addressed the initial conflict over foreigners' lowering wages for agricultural day labor, thereby paving the way for current good relations between

Sicilians and immigrants. As this example shows, however, beneath the "solidarity of the poor" there looms the constant threat of a "war of the poor." Associations appeal to public and government not only with the intent of publicizing antiracism and multiculturalism, but also to monitor and avert these tendencies towards "war."

5. Institutions, Associations, and Ideologies

Through their diverse activities, the Palermo churches, unions, and associations described above contribute to the principal paradigmatic understandings of immigration and racism found in Italy today. That is, they produce fairly coherent and sophisticated analyses of these phenomena and relate them to certain guiding political ideologies. The paradigm of labor solidarity, for example, places the call for immigrant rights within the context of the rights and solidarity of labor (and citizens) as understood by the Italian Left--a position supported by the majority of institutions outside the Catholic (and Protestant) Church. To speak of paradigms and ideologies is not to suggest that all institutions and associations retain the services of full-time ideologues, although some do. Rather I label as paradigmatic the understandings they produce and disseminate because they serve as models for both interpretation and action.

It is a measure of the essential similarity of these paradigms that they share a limited set of recurrent themes

defined above. It may be, of course, that debate has not, as yet, had time to mature. Even so, the uniformity is all the more striking given the lack of interchange. For, although the CGIL collaborates with several associations, for the other unions and churches this is unusual. One associational representative told me that immigration had become a vanity issue, with the result that everybody was working on it by themselves, from their own particular angle. In fact I often felt my own vision of the local and national associational and institutional field to be more comprehensive than that of the representatives I interviewed.

Much research in Europe has shown that elites such as politicians, government officials, media figures, and intellectuals often portray immigration as essentially problematic, thereby underwriting the symbolic if not the material degradation of immigrants (Castles 1984; Castles and Kosack 1985; CCCS 1982; Grillo 1985; Reeves 1983; Van Dijk 1987). Before the passage of the "Martelli law," the Italian state's complacency with regard to illegal and unregulated immigration could be regarded as provoking crisis if not racism. Media exploitation of the subject also exploits the themes of crisis and conflict, while it also serves as a wake-up call for Italians languishing in the self-satisfied myth of Italian tolerance (Manconi 1990; Marletti 1989).

But in general the Italian debate, especially the

contributions of the kinds of groups described above, portrays immigration as more resource than irresolvable problem, and often alludes to the successes and mistakes of other countries. According to the prevalent discourse, this resource harbors the potential danger of a "war of the poor," continued marginalization of foreigners, and the specter of racism, if it is unattended. This discourse, moreover, finds its expression in government and public arenas because of the activities of organizations and institutions. Immigrants themselves rarely enter these arenas and when they do it is on the terms set by institutional frameworks (Danna 1989: 54), despite claims and aspirations for collaboration. In this sense, then, there exists in Italy what Grillo (1985: 290), in his study of institutional responses to immigration in Lyon, France, called "the representation of problems and the problem of representation."

In contrast to their European counterparts, Italian institutions and associations retain a fundamental optimism. French institutions at the time of Grillo's fieldwork in the mid-1970s, for instance, represented North Africans as the bearers of a disturbing foreignness (*étrangeté*) to be minimized through programs of "assimilation" and "evolution" (Grillo 1985: 285). In contrast, Italian churches, unions, associations, indeed even the government maintain the desirability and necessity of insuring cultural diversity within a framework of (near)

parity. The strength of the Catholic Church and the Left in Italy accounts for the prominence of ideologies of solidarity. As noted in Chapter II (sections 9 and 10), the recent date of debate in Italy may also account for Italian optimism regarding diversity, which has been expressed in terms of contemporary concerns such as multiculturalism rather than earlier concerns such as immigrant assimilation. The absence of any problematic fusion of colonial history and immigration in Italy, relative to the experience of many other European countries, could contribute as well.

At the same time this optimism derives from the process of dialectical representation so characteristic of politics. In broad terms, churches, unions, and associations define their goals in opposition to racism abroad, irresponsible government lethargy, anti-immigrant politicians, and racist currents within the populace. As a result of this continual battle of position, paradigms come to resemble each other. The border issue, debated as part of the 1990 law on immigration, is a good example. The Center-Right government proposed closing the borders and policing them with the aid of the army. The opposition, made up of churches, unions, associations, and non-governing parties on the Left, in particular the Democratic Party of the Left, criticized the proposals as contributing to xenophobia by promoting a protectionist "Fortress Europe" syndrome. The Left also argued that closing the

borders was unrealistic given the demographic trends behind immigration. Said Antonio Pizzinato, a long-time CGIL leader, "The barriers, the 'closed number' [**numero chiuso**], the 'programmed number" [**numero programmato**], are all excuses for those who have not understood the processes that are overwhelming our planet" (quoted in Cuffaro 1989: 14). Later, when the issue of borders was effectively settled, the Lega Nord and the MSI's call for the repeal of the law similarly served as a pivot of ideological opposition.

The theme of Sicilian tolerance, which figures prominently in much institutional and associational discourse, illustrates some of these processes of ideology-making and representation. For many institutions and associations, Sicily's position at the crossroads of Mediterranean history, and the defining experience of nearly a century of emigration, explain current tolerance or constitute the moral basis for its enactment in the present. In this way aspects of the Sicilian experience serve as a kind of moral and rhetorical point of reference, closer to peoples' perceived experiences than the heavy paradigmatic abstractions of multiculturalism as such. Not every institution accepts the notion of Sicilian tolerance or a Sicilian mission, nor do those which do center all their activity around this theme when the need to influence government is undeniable. But the recurrence of the theme

is a measure of its attraction and power.⁷ Significantly, analogous formulations at the national level about the duty incumbent on Italy as a "country of emigration" do not enjoy similar purchase on the national conscience. The capacity of this Sicilian theme to give salience to more general and abstract formulations makes it attractive to institutional leaders who seek to communicate and persuade. In addition it serves to distinguish the otherwise much maligned Sicilian experience and to mark it off from that of other Italians, particularly the "intolerant" Northerners.

Despite similarities in discourse, institutions in Palermo do approach the question of immigration somewhat differently from each other and with varying success. Undoubtedly churches here as elsewhere have done the most concrete work. The Social-Medical Center at the Oratory Santa Chiara was among the first such centers in Italy. The vision and organization behind such work draws much from earlier programs with the poor at home and abroad. Critics dismiss such efforts as **assistenzialismo**, a system of handouts fostering a cycle of dependency among those assisted. In my experience, church representatives often anticipated these criticisms and countered by pointing to

7. The notion of Sicilian tolerance is allied to a more general sense of the island's role in the past future of the Mediterranean basin. For example, the "Alliance for Progress" in Palermo offers cash prizes for the best student essays on the role of Sicily in current Mediterranean economic and social development (*Giornale di Sicilia* 31 October 1990).

their current collaborative and empowering projects. However, churches here as elsewhere in Italy tend to cultivate somewhat possessive relationships with particular nationalities (cf. Bocca 1988). One church official told me how different sects "guard their immigrants of color as though they were the very keys to paradise."

It is the opinion of most observers that unions, in contrast to churches, have done little more than talk. A CGIL representative admitted that immigration had caught all the major unions unawares and that not before 1990 did they embark on a concerted effort to address the issue. As with unions elsewhere in Europe, the actions of the CGIL, the CISL, and the UIL seldom measure up to their own paradigms of labor solidarity (Castles 1984; Castles and Kosack 1985; Grillo 1985; Phizacklea and Miles 1980). Despite decades of immigration and a discourse of solidarity, by late 1990 only the CGIL had even considered the idea of bringing together foreign and Sicilian workers. Sicilian unions are weak and they face the problem of organizing foreigners with typically high rates of undocumented employment and illegal status. But their poor showing also derives from their understandable reluctance to antagonize their constituency in a climate of declining union power.

Traditional responsibilities and current programs do not obligate associations, as they do churches and unions, to grapple with the daily problems of immigrants.

Associations instead turn to publicizing the goals of immigrant rights and antiracism, and to bringing immigrants themselves into debate. Judged by their own high and optimistic goals they fall short. Yet their activities constitute an important means of familiarizing the public with the issues.

While presenting a similar progressive stance towards immigration, institutions in Palermo also define their goals and methods in opposition to each other. Churches humbly note how their programs compare favorably with others' talk. Unions regard church efforts as missing the fundamental issues of work and rights, issues on which they possess unrivaled expertise. Associations contrast their collaborative method and radical agenda to the empty rhetoric of unions and the stifling **assistenzialismo** of churches. All portray others as motivated by special interests. Many leaders with whom I spoke blame the short life of the Palermo Coalition on entrenched political gamesmanship.

Like their counterparts at the national level, institutions in Palermo make their greatest contribution to debate by fostering it. Their activities have influenced government, immigrants, and public opinion. Continual institutional and associational pressure, as well as European Community expectations, compelled the uncharacteristically rapid enactment of legislation on immigration in 1989-1990. Aside from the stray innovator

in a local public health office making use of a regional law financing health care for immigrants (e.g., the work of De Stefano, Messina, and Pampanini 1989), or the opening of a mosque in Palermo (*La Sicilia* 22 September 1990), the region of Sicily has remained silent and inactive on the subject. The same could be said of the province and city of Palermo. Italo Tripi, head of the Palermo CGIL, characterized government lethargy this way:

The union [CGIL] is surely slow in approaching these themes [of immigrant conditions], but much more grave is the delay of local public institutions and the governing parties. With few exceptions, the parties currently show little interest in this reality, perhaps because they consider it without electoral benefit (since *extracounnitari* do not have the right to vote), without realizing the racist implications of such behavior. [*Giornale di Sicilia* 14 November 1990]

His appraisal of political silence and government inaction could not be more accurate. The fringe leftist party, Proletarian Democracy, was the sole party in Palermo to make immigration an issue during the local elections in the spring of 1990. The city opened an Immigration Office in Albergheria in early 1990 only to close it several days later, presumably for lack of funds (personal communication, Nina Rocca). The regional government, as of my departure in late 1990, had yet to present let alone pass legislation on immigration as required by the Law #39. An exception to this torpor is a regional law authorizing health care to immigrants regardless of employment status

(Forti 1990: 115). Many northern regions, in contrast, passed legislation before the enactment of the national law as a means of addressing the situation then ignored by Rome.

In addition to helping immigrants meet basic needs, institutions endeavor to bring them into debate and activity by encouraging organization and self-expression. Immigrant marginality, transience, and a common inclination to view present hardship as only temporary all thwart these efforts at collaborative organization. Nevertheless, institutions sometimes succeed in giving immigrants the tools of political protest. Chief among these are the key notions of antiracism, multiculturalism, and equal rights.

Finally, institutions do much to shape public opinion. As earlier analysis suggested, it is particularly among members of the bourgeoisie that paradigms of solidarity find acceptance. These Palermitans are disposed by education, class culture, and political ideology to receive and entertain such understandings as they are communicated through conferences, fairs, media reporting, and direct participation in institutional and associational activities. It is indicative of this proclivity to paradigmatic interpretations that bourgeois and not working Palermitans espouse notions of Sicilian tolerance and duty towards immigrants.

Institutional paradigms of solidarity rarely enjoy a similar hold on the minds of working people. This is

because such people are excluded by virtue of education and class from the worlds of influential public discourse and the related concerns of systematic coherence and political ideology. By the time of my research in 1990, however, there was some popular understanding of official norms against racism. The characteristic ambivalence of working people towards foreigners is structured by the irresolvable conflict between the fear of foreigners eroding minimal working-class security and the empathy of this class for those who must migrate and struggle to meet their basic needs. In the absence of anti-immigrant political entrepreneurs, working-class antagonism in Palermo will continue to be offset by class solidarity.

6. Tolerant South, Intolerant North

The last three chapters have shown the related themes of southern tolerance and northern intolerance to hold a certain currency in Palermo. For many representatives of unions, churches, and associations, and not a few bourgeois Palermitans, Sicily's rich cultural history and experience of emigration serves or should serve to ground southern tolerance. This moral-historical interpretation does not find much favor among working people, but they make similar claims about northern vices and southern virtues in rejecting the **terrone** stereotype. In the final sections of this chapter I examine this Sicilian thesis by comparing anti-immigrant violence and politics in the Italian North

and South. Violence against immigrants and their exploitation in fact occur throughout Italy. What distinguishes the North from the South is rather its politicized form of anti-immigrant violence, as well as its substantial political mobilization against immigrants. Regional political history and culture, I maintain, account for these differences in the politicization of race and immigration.

A review of several national and regional newspapers over the period February-November 1990 complicates the Sicilian view of a tolerant South, intolerant North.⁸ In Florence, the self-proclaimed center of Italian culture, the beating of foreigners during Carnival ushered in a series of attacks, including numerous beatings of North Africans by the "Goebbels brigade." Trailers owned by or provided for immigrants were burned and there was also a failed attempt to run down four Senegalese with a car. Other northern events included: beatings in Milan, Turin, Rome, and the Como area; the shooting of immigrants in Udine and a series of threats to Italians bringing immigrants to a local church service; the destruction of a trailer and the beating of one of its occupants in Milan; the burning of a center for immigrants in Trento; and several unattributed killings of immigrants in Rome. There was also an the attack on a Nigerian soccer referee by

8. Among the newspapers consulted most frequently were: *Corriere della Sera*, *Giornale di Sicilia*, *Il Manifesto*, *La Nazione*, *L'Ora*, *La Repubblica*, *La Sicilia*, and *L'Unità*.

disgruntled coaches, players, and fans on the occasion of a disputed call in a regional match near Pisa and the subsequent burglary and ransacking of his apartment. Young men, typically employed and often members of a skinhead, neo-Nazi, or soccer hooligan bands called **ultra**, committed the majority of these crimes. The Veneto section of the "Ku Klux Klan," for example, claimed responsibility for letters sent to foreign (i.e., Third World) students in Padova. Smeared with feces, the letters began "Hello Dirty Negro," and closed "If I'm a true Aryan I must kill a black man."⁹ These groups recall the heritage of Fascism and Nazism in their brutal attempts to "clean up the city," in the words of the Florentine "avengers" who chased and beat immigrants. Without doubt they seek to shock and embarrass the complacent mainstream; also without doubt their ideology is perverse and destined to remain marginal. But their acts are meant as exemplary, public corrections of a society they see as flawed and are therefore profoundly political in nature.

Anti-immigrant violence in the South rarely exhibits an explicitly political character. In Sicily the violence reported was of a lesser order and included: several robberies; a rape; the ejection of a Senegalese vendor from a public bus for unclear reasons; objections to the baptism of a daughter by an African born priest; and the killing,

9. As in other such slogans, alliteration and rhyme are employed: **Se un ariano vero devo ammazzare un uomo nero.**

apparently not racially motivated, of an immigrant during the robbery of a cafe. Setting fire to an abandoned house in Syracuse in which several Tunisians were squatting was the sole example of politicized, northern style violence. Police in fact traced flyers distributed by the perpetrators of this event to a northern neo-Nazi group calling itself "Ludwig."

Violence committed against immigrants in the South is characterized above all by brutal forms of labor control and exploitation, particularly in agricultural work. An extreme case is presented by the murders of Africans by the camorra, the Neapolitan version of organized crime, in the area around Caserta to the north of Naples. Here thousands of foreigners work the tomato harvest under terrible conditions which included long hours, low wages, few accommodations, hardened labor bosses, the threat of physical violence, and local resentment. In addition to overseeing the harvest, the camorra occasionally enlists immigrants to transport drugs. When several runners attempted to circumvent its control, the camorra killed them. These murders were not based on nationalist or racist principles; rather they punished those who stepped out of line and warned others, foreign and Italian, against similar acts of folly. According to observers in Palermo, it is a sign of the fundamental instability of the camorra that it entrusts responsibility to transient foreigners (personal communication, Alfonso Manocchio). They say that

the stable Sicilian mafia is biding its time for the formation of an established immigrant population whose marginality and stability will provide willing and trustworthy recruits.

Labor relations in Sicily exhibit a similar if less violent logic. Immigrants and their advocates describe as common the coercion and exploitation of foreign workers. The systematic abuse of vulnerable workers is not, however, confined to foreigners. Despite impressive postwar modernization, chronic underemployment and unemployment as high as 25% make many Sicilians vulnerable to the depredations of employers. As I noted in Chapter III (sections 2 and 3), the most striking feature of the Palermo economy is the preponderance of unstable employment. Thus a CISL union representative with whom I spoke cautions immigrants against interpreting overwork and underpay as expressions of racism. The exploitation of workers, she points out, is the unfortunate norm at the bottom of the labor market.

While violence against foreigners occurs throughout the country, anti-immigrant political protest is confined to the North. In the period under review, merchants in Milan and Turin called for the removal of North African and Senegalese street vendors from business districts. In Vada, parents withdrew children from school in protest of what they considered the risk of disease (i.e., AIDS) presented by Senegalese attending evening courses in

Italian in the local school building. And the Lega Nord and the neo-Fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) vowed to overturn Law #39 on immigration.

7. Carnival in Florence

More than any other incident in the period under review the events of the Carnival in Florence signalled the formation of new racist politics against immigrants in Italy.¹⁰ The opening pages of this dissertation presented the events, which centered on the attack against immigrants by a large group of armed and costumed youth who called themselves "avengers of the night" and who vowed to "clean up the city" of foreigners. According to the investigating magistrate, the group had been inspired if not materially aided by merchants in the city's historic center. A week earlier merchants had sponsored a march in protest of the presence of immigrant street vendors under the euphemistic banner "citizens in defense" and had attributed "violence, degradation and drug dealing" to immigrants.

The attack and march provoked a period of intense political activity within Florence. After the Socialist mayor, Giorgio Morales, allowed the police to clear the center of the city of foreigners, the Democratic Party of the Left denounced the police action as worthy of South Africa and withdrew its support from the City Council and

10. Unless otherwise indicated, this account draws on newspaper sources and my own observations in Florence.

forced his resignation. The CGIL, Christian Democratic (DC), Republican (PRI), and Democratic (PDS) parties condemned the attack as racist. Spokesmen for the Senegalese community denounced the march, which they had initially supported for its condemnation of drug dealing, as a thinly veiled attack on all immigrants. Students and mostly Senegalese immigrants then staged a hunger strike in protest of what they described as racism, to which the CGIL and, later, other unions acted as consultants. A group of sixty prominent Florentine intellectuals signed an "appeal against intolerance" and blamed the city's new-found infamy on its closed-minded "shopkeeper mentality." Attacks on immigrants continued throughout this period, with graffiti suggesting "work for Italians, the boot to foreigners." One of the Carnival "avengers," caught by police and interviewed by the press, exacerbated tensions by vowing to repeat his actions, which he defended as non-racist. International and national media coverage of the hunger strike and violence further embarrassed the beleaguered administration. As a compromise, the mayor designated some public market space for immigrant vendors, which ended the strike but sparked a brief counter protest by the merchants.

These events placed Florence at the center of national debate over the merits of the immigration legislation at that moment being passed into law. Parties opposed to the law such as the Lega Nord, the MSI, and the PRI argued that

the lenient policy of the new law actually provoked racism and crisis, as exemplified by the regrettable events of Carnival. According to them, it did this by encouraging an influx of foreigners for which Italy was ill prepared and had no economic need, and by provoking the justified anger of Italians at the immigrants and the state who were depriving them of their own resources. The PSI and the PDS, respectively the sponsor and major supporter of the legislation, countered that only the legal protections afforded immigrants by the new law could guarantee the humane treatment of foreigners, protect them from the violence and abuse of the Carnival, and give Italians the assurance that immigration was at last firmly under the regulatory hand of the state. The PDS held a conference in Florence on Italy's multiracial future to emphasize its commitment to immigrant rights and integration. A large antiracist rally, entitled "No to Racism," drew 30,000 people, and brought to a close the intense scrutiny of the city. In attendance were local students, immigrants, workers, and union representatives, as well as delegations from hundreds of immigrant and Italian organizations throughout Italy.

8. Towards a New Racism in Italy

As noted in the Introduction, the Carnival of Florence transformed the politics of immigration and racism in Italy in two key ways. The Carnival "Moroccan hunt" represented

a novel fusion of violence and racial politics. Clara Gallini has pointed out how its brutality, occurring within the public ritual setting of Carnival, affected the transformation into politics of a preexisting repertoire of racial imagery embedded in travel brochures, arcade games, advertisements, and stereotypes:

[F]or the first time in Italy some people undertook to transform the "racial discourse" from the level of scenic metaphor to that of an immediate symbolic practice which involved the direct use of violence. As we have seen, a good part of the lexicon was there to use: it was enough to collect it, reactivate it and put it to use at a moment determined by political criteria. The strategy was therefore **political** as was the argument. [Gallini 1992: 217]

Other violence visited on foreigners elsewhere in the North similarly draws on preexisting models for excluding and terrorizing the Other. Young "skins" recall the lineage of Fascism and Nazism in their brutal attempts to "clean up" their cities, and in their death threats to blacks as part of an "Aryan" duty. The number of "skins" is not large and their actions are roundly condemned by all political parties. Perhaps their most important role in Italian debate is to act as a foil to the respectable parties who oppose immigrant rights. In this sense their aberrant behavior contrasts with the responsibility of the establishment and serves as a warning for the inevitable trouble immigration brings.

By agreeing with the merchants' protest, the political parties opposed to immigration legislation legitimated the

protest, which then served as a model for similar mobilizations in other northern Italian cities, led for example by local representatives of the national merchants' association, Confederazione Generale del Commercio (Manconi 1990). Given this crucial national validation, powerful business people could claim to be defending national economic interests and public order through, precisely, anti-immigrant initiatives. The protest furthermore illustrated that "an attitude of rejection towards foreigners need not necessarily call itself racist and should not be conflated with the semiclandestine violence of organized bands" (Manconi 1990: 59).

Like the new racism elsewhere in Western Europe, this new form of anti-immigrant mobilization in Italy shields itself from charges of racism by denouncing the violent racism of groups like the "avengers of the night." Instead it phrases opposition to foreigners in terms of such seemingly irreproachable themes as law and order, government irresponsibility, the defense of local economic interests, and tax evasion. Protests aimed at the plans of local governments to house immigrants temporarily in working-class areas of Rome and Milan illustrate this. Advised and organized by the MSI or the Lega Nord, protestors typically anticipate media claims of racism by blaming government irresponsibility for immigrant suffering, as well as their own anger. They unfailingly train their protest on the state by contrasting the

government inaction on behalf of its own people with what they portray as its unfair solicitation of the needs of foreigners (**La Repubblica** 7 February and 20 June 1990; **Giornale di Sicilia** 10 November 1990). Because it rejects violence and racism, and because it engages such resonant themes as the role of the state, this type of argument became the most acceptable and widespread form of anti-immigrant politics in the North.

The parties opposed to the "Martelli law" used the momentum generated by the Carnival in Florence to step up attacks on the newly established rights of immigrants. The Republicans (PRI) called for an immediate closing of the borders while the MSI and Lega Nord announced their intention to organize a referendum to repeal the legislation. Lega leaders dismissed frequent charges of racism, claiming to act as a mouthpiece for citizens who were justifiably outraged at the state's encouragement of massive immigration at a time of increasing economic insecurity. Rather than the new law, they advocated repatriation as a means of protecting Italian jobs and wages, and as a way of precluding the inevitable conflict occasioned by what they describe as an unassimilable immigration of color (e.g., **Il Venerdì di Repubblica** 23 March 1990; **Avvenimenti** 12 July 1990). Rapid cultural or ethnic change, warned Lega founder and leader Umberto Bossi, can lead to the development of "the pathological behaviors of homosexuality, juvenile delinquency, drugs,

[and] create the psychological conditions that favor for example sterility" [in the traumatized northern population] (cited in Manconi 1990: 99). The Socialist and Democratic parties condemned these views as irresponsible election year tactics prone to incite racism. The governing coalition of Christian Democrats, Socialists, Republicans, and Liberals (PLI) however, announced it would close Italy's borders to most further immigration and take a hard line on illegal immigrants, which it did with unanticipated effectiveness.

In his study of racism and politics in Italy, Luigi Manconi (1990) identifies the Lega Nord as potentially the most effective "political entrepreneur of racism." The Republican party, which had staunchly opposed the immigration legislation sponsored by one of its senior coalition partners, is too small to mobilize a mass constituency and its modern political culture precludes the adoption of racism. The MSI, while active in mobilizing anti-immigrant sentiment at the local level, is hamstrung by a national leadership understandably averse to the racist charge. Election results in 1990, moreover, rewarded neither party for their crusade against immigration legislation. The Lega Nord, in contrast, is a young and vigorous party legitimated by electoral success. Its early rhetoric emphasized the defense of the ethnic territory of Lombardy, and was infused with a "syndrome of invasion" and a Manichean image of itself surrounded by

enemies. Lega discourse neatly synthesizes its demonology of the state, Southerners, and foreigners. In this view, the tax-hungry, irresponsible state is run by and for Southerners who further degrade the North by permitting the disruptive presence of foreigners. It is important to note that anti-immigrant politics in Italy are in the formative stage. Manconi concludes that the future direction of Lega politics is uncertain; as regards immigration, it is possible that the Lega's own success will temper its rhetoric and change its agenda to the more acceptable theme of tax revolt and the duties of governing.¹¹

9. The Northern Question

This brief review suggests that it is the degree to which immigration is politicized, more than any measure of violence or exploitation, that marks what many Sicilians see as a pattern of northern violence and southern tolerance. Reactions to immigrants do of course vary within regions and according to factors such as the form in which immigrants are integrated into the labor market (see, for example, Cusumano 1976; and Italia-Razzismo 1990). Yet these broad regional differences merit attention in their own right as the new racism grows in appeal across Europe.

11. In this regard it is interesting to note that Lega founder and leader Bossi admits to having adopted an anti-southern position early on to garner popular support in the North. He also claims to have assumed this position in order to give other political parties the impression that the Lega was extremist and therefore of no consequence (Gilbert 1992: 46).

In the remaining pages of this chapter I argue that broad differences in politics and culture account for the divergent political reception of immigrants in Italy's North and South. The apolitical southern reaction stems from a clientelistic system that stifles popular political expression of any stripe, while northern intolerance feeds off a sense of crisis and a history of receiving immigrants as mobilized by strong regionalist political forces such as the Lega Nord.

As I have shown, politicized intolerance is intimately linked to a strong pro-immigrant rights politics in the same North when compared to the South--a politics which in many ways pioneered what I called above paradigms of solidarity, as well as attendant organizational forms now common throughout Italy. It is also a politics that has provoked responses from the northern "leagues" such as the Lega Nord and the MSI. Pro-immigrant politics find acceptance here for several reasons. First, national opinion surveys consistently find the North more tolerant than the South (Amodio 1989; Bonifazi and Golini 1989). This reflects the tendency for people with more education and better jobs to express racial tolerance, generally. Second, the nature of immigrant participation on the northern labor market is one of integration and not competition and conflict. One of Europe's richest areas, northern Italy commonly experiences labor shortages and the call for immigrant labor is great, especially in services

and small industry but increasingly in heavy industry. In the period under review, in fact, many foreigners registering at public employment offices in the North received job offers. Of the almost 15,000 immigrants who had received jobs through the offices in the first two months of 1990, approximately 13,500 had obtained them in the North (*La Repubblica* 18/19 March 1990). In Vicenza, for example, 2,200 of 2,800 obtained jobs, nearly all in industry (Forti 1990: 117). Third, northern Italy's strong tradition of leftist intellectual activity, trade unionism, and local government underwrite ideologies of tolerance and solidarity.

Indeed, aside from the predictable location of pro-immigrant activity in Rome, the North distinguishes itself for its concentration of antiracist, pro-integration politics. Churches, unions, and associations conduct innumerable programs, some of which have served as models for activities elsewhere. More important, regional, provincial, and communal governments anticipated national legislation and established immigrant programs for temporary housing, professional training, health care, and cultural activities (Bassetti 1990: 99-102). After all the Florence of the Carnival violence hosted the first annual National Antiracism Conference only two months earlier. One member of the City Council, Moreno Biagioni (PDS), devoted his energies to immigration and opened an Immigration Office in May of 1989 (*L'Unità* 17 February

1990). The Province of Florence formed a special Council on the topic as early as 1988 and Law #12 of the Region of Tuscany provides for various programs (Bassetti 1990: 102-3; for details see Biagioni 1990; and Volpi 1990).

This concentration of political activity in favor of immigrants accounts for the quick and strong response in Florence to the events of Carnival. Churches, unions, associations, and especially the local Democratic Party of the Left condemned the violence as racist and blamed the "citizens in defense" march for exonerating if not provoking the attack. These pro-immigrant forces launched a broadside of media counterattack, demonstrations, marches--and political maneuvering in the case of the PDS's withdrawal of support for the Socialists in the City Council. Ultimately they succeeded in defining the events, at least to much of the national media, as intolerant if not racist. Finally, they won the concession of **piazza** space for immigrant vendors which was to serve as an example for other northern areas such as Livorno (*L'Unità* 27 March 1990), competing with the alternative Florentine example of police sweeps and merchants' protests.

With regard to political intolerance, in the North it derives from a combination of factors including the experience of massive southern immigration, a sense of crisis or state mismanagement, and strong political mobilization for regional interests. As I described in Chapter II (section 3), southern immigrants in the North

were relegated to the worst housing, rendered poor services, and confined for some time to the bottom of the labor market. Contemporary debate and newspaper commentary moreover promoted anti-southern ideology, which was encapsulated in the common use of the terms of **terroni** and "Africans" for Southerners. The derisive **terrone** stereotype endures today despite the advances of Southerners in the North (Colucci et al. 1989). Many current portrayals of Africans and Asians as dangerous harbingers of instability may be traced to this template of anti-southernism. Thus, as already noted, graffiti in the North reads "Out with **terroni** and Bedouins" (Bocca 1988). Targets of skinhead violence and propaganda are immigrants and Southerners alike, as well as Jews and Gypsies on occasion (**La Repubblica** 8 March 1990; **L'Unità** 28 March 1990); and the Lega Nord identifies the "southernist state" as a plague far worse than the lamentable "africanization" visited by foreigners on northern cities (Manconi 1990).

Anti-immigrant politics in the North also feed off of a sense of crisis. The period in question saw the sometimes chaotic registration of immigrants under the new law, and newspapers such as **La Nazione** of Florence did not hesitate to publicize crimes committed by foreigners (e.g., 15, 19, and 28 February 1990). More important still was the housing crisis for immigrants. In contrast to the situation in the South, documented work and housing scarcity characterized immigrant life in the North. High

rents, housing shortages, and the reluctance of Italians to rent to foreigners created a homeless immigrant population. In Florence, a newspaper poll found that many Florentines refused to rent to "blacks" or overcharged them by 50% (**La Gazette** 2 March 1900). Some 200 Nigerians squatted in a former Institute for the Blind in Padova, for example, while over 100 immigrants occupied a former factory in Bologna, and 500 occupied unused buildings in Milan (Cuffaro 1990). Perhaps the former Pantanella factory in Rome attracted the most attention when fights broke out between the 2,500 North African and Asians squatters (**La Repubblica** 6 November 1990); the factory was eventually destroyed by fire (**Il Manifesto** 13 November 1990). These terrible housing conditions led to protest. When the city government of Milan decided to stop lodging a group of Egyptians (which it had removed earlier from so-called "minimal housing" or **case minime**) because it had rejected their requests for public housing, the immigrants protested at City Hall and clashed with police (**La Repubblica** 8 November 1990). In Padova, over 1000 immigrants and Italians gathered to protest the immigrant housing problem (Cuffaro 1990). Squatting, homelessness, and demonstrations all contributed to a sense of an immigration problem verging on disorder.

In this atmosphere the Lega Nord and the MSI sought to rouse public opinion against public expenditures or the granting of rights to foreigners. In Milan they

distributed flyers against immigrants seeking temporary shelter, reading "They have fooled you" (**Vi hanno imbrogliato**) (Cuffaro 1990: 22). Their appeals focused on the rights of nationals, the irresponsibility of the central state, and the cultural unsuitability of immigrants for eventual assimilation--always coupled with an explicit denial of racist motivation. In short they attacked the idea of government spending on foreigners with the additional understanding that Africans and Asians do not merit integration. Like so much of the anti-immigrant politics in Europe today, this platform builds on and perverts the conceptual underpinning of the antiracism movement (Balibar 1991d; Taguieff 1989). Like Le Pen's Front National in France, the Lega formally rejects racism and embraces the notion of cultural difference to such an extent that it looks fondly on the prospect of repatriating cultural Others so that both parties may retain the right of full cultural expression. The venom of the Lega is thus masked in relation to foreigners. Regarding the "southernist state" it is full blown. The terrain of fiscal and cultural regionalism has proved fertile ground in the Italian North, where the Lega owes its meteoric rise to a powerful fusion of anger at the state with a sense of local autonomy thought to be endangered by Southerners and immigrants. It is significant that Lega supporters are not generally unemployed or located at the bottom of the labor market alongside foreigners. Rather they are well-

educated, white collar employees and self-employed professionals who fear ambitious and skilled Southerners and their descendants (Cesareo 1989 cited in Manconi 1990).

10. Empathy and Anti-Politics in Sicilian "Tolerance"

Immigration is far less politicized in the South than in the North. What political action there is in the South is, moreover, aimed at regulating immigration, combatting racism, and promoting immigration. In the absence of significant government intervention, churches, unions, and associations have created structures to assist immigrants and have shaped the politics of race and immigration, as the first sections of this chapter demonstrated. Sicilian institutions and associations draw on aspects of the Sicilian experience to serve as a kind of moral point of reference to explain and promote the integration of immigrants. Not all institutions and associations accept this Sicilian model, nor do those which do concentrate on the theme to the exclusion of pressing local and regional government into action on the basis on their legal obligations under Law #39. But the recurrence of the model is a measure of its attraction and salience.

The concentration of anti-immigrant politics and politicized forms of violence in the North lend a certain credence to Sicilian claims about the basic intolerance and racism of many Northerners. Many Sicilians with whom I spoke in 1990 found evidence for their claims in the events

of Florence and elsewhere, which were vigorously reported by a national media inclined to favor initiatives for immigrants. Violence against and exploitation of an immigrant population made vulnerable by poverty and precarious legal status, however, were common throughout Italy.

Nevertheless, Southerners have shown little or no interest in anti-immigrant politics, despite an equally intense dislike for Rome, high unemployment, and some discontent over immigration. My purpose here is to link this absence to the particular political environment of the South. Whereas local government in the North has sought to address problems of housing and health associated with immigration, thereby throwing the issue into the political arena, the absence of similar initiatives in the South has worked to exclude the topic from debate about public spending. In Palermo, the city opened an Immigration Office for only a few days in early 1990 (personal communication, Nina Rocca) and the region had yet to fulfill its legal obligation to pass pertinent legislation as of the start of 1991. Notwithstanding the successes of some institutions in Palermo, the lack of government involvement deprives the immigration debate and programs of the money, visibility, and legitimacy required to sustain high levels of political activity. No doubt there would be a public uproar in Palermo were Africans or Asians ever to receive subsidized public housing. But this city's poor

and selective delivery of services, which denies many Palermitans their rightful claim, virtually guarantees that immigrant housing programs will never come to pass. Meanwhile, though, immigrants do find housing opportunity in the many abandoned and crumbling structures of a city like Palermo; they are not a visible homeless population in the South, as they are in the North.

At a more fundamental level, the clientelistic distribution of resources in the South severely limits the range and potential of political mobilization so common in the North. The dyadic nature of clientelism, a corrupt bureaucracy, and strong bonds between organized crime and government all stymie popular political participation and wear down protest, as I discussed in Chapter III (section 7). In 1976, for example, the Christian Democratic leadership in City Hall used clientelistic election promises to diffuse the unprecedented mobilization of the city's poor in the housing struggle. More recently, the antimafia movement and the concomitant growth of local initiatives associated with the "Palermo Spring" have attacked links between mafia and government. By 1991, even this well organized protest appeared worn down by the weight of official inertia, corruption, and the blatant assertion of power by the mafia. But it has recently gained new momentum as the state has taken unprecedented steps against organized crime.

The comparative ethnography of Caroline White (1980),

which shows that not all southern politics are clientelistic, and the current (1992-3) scandals in Milan which implicate the Socialist Party, other political parties, and figures in industry in large-scale bribery and kickback schemes, underline the dangers in erecting a dichotomy between the modern political culture of the North and the corruption of the South. It is no exaggeration to say, however, that the principle function of politics in Catania or Palermo or Naples is the maintenance of power by the Christian Democrats with the help of organized crime (see Chubb 1982; Crisantino 1990; Santino 1989). Mafiosi, encouraged to give state's evidence by the disintegration of traditional norms of "honorable" behavior among their fellows, and by recent witness protection and other antimafia measures, increasingly reveal connections between organized crime and politicians. The Economist (1993: 49) reports that the "interior ministry has already suspended 43 municipal councils in southern Italy, on the ground that they were Mafia-infiltrated." Such an environment precludes anti-immigrant politics because politicians waste no time on a non-constituency of foreigners, and because there are few practicable avenues for political mobilization. The violence visited on immigrants in the South stems not from some desire to make their presence a political issue but grows out of a brutally exploitative labor system in which immigrants occupy the most vulnerable positions.

Perhaps the southern political environment is not so much apolitical as anti-political. For patronage, the protection racket, and the exploitation and physical disciplining of workers whether foreign or domestic all suppress the mass political participation that characterizes the North. Into this vacuum left by government inaction on immigration move churches, unions, and associations. In Palermo they evoke Sicilian cultural history and the emigrant experience to explain and call for tolerance, but it may well be the anti-politics of the South that works as effectively against anti-immigrant political mobilization.

Chapter VII

Conclusions

Race and immigration have become indissolubly linked in postwar Western Europe in the context of immigration from Southern Europe, former European colonies, and much of the Third World. In recent years violence and political mobilization against "foreigners" and "immigrants," whether recent immigrants and refugees or established immigrant or minority communities, have made race, immigration, and European identity contested social and political issues. These hyphenated Europeans and their European supporters, calling themselves antiracists and proponents of diversity, have responded by insisting on a tolerant and pluralistic new Europe. As Gary McDonogh has observed, "the experience of the new immigration, differentiation, and conflict has become a profoundly **European** phenomenon" (McDonogh 1992). This new experience of diversity in Europe can only become more intense in the political tumult accompanying the fall of Communist Eastern Europe, the persistent crisis in the Third World, and the on-going political and economic transformations accompanying the integration of the European Community. At issue are many questions of identity, rights, and power within the new Europe, as well as the relation of an integrated Europe to the rest of the world. It is a question of who will be defined as European and to what end.

The new racism describes a trend in political

mobilization that channels and reflects popular antipathy towards targeted populations. Given the antiracist lobby, official norms against racism, and even uneasiness among politicians with racial terminology itself, the new racism phrases its deep-seated objections to the "non-European" presence in terms of culture and nation. Following the work Etienne Balibar and others, I have maintained that the ideologies promoted by Jean-Marie Le Pen and similar anti-immigrant politicians are racist to the extent that they promote a vision of humanity as composed of bounded, natural, and unequal groups. The claims of these new racists to the contrary, their policies and proposals in fact promote the vilification and marginalization of populations that already find themselves at the bottom of the European class structure and excluded from the political and cultural mainstream.

Research on the new racism in Europe has contributed to the understanding of race in several ways. By showing how contemporary culturalist and nationalist arguments recall former racist ideologies, this research charts the continuing transformation of ideas about natural difference and inequality. The basic malleability and tenacity of race continue to give salience to notions about the natural inequality and difference of human groups. The process of racialization, now as in the colonial past, in large measure stigmatizes populations which are excluded from power and facilitates their exploitation. This research

also underlines the key role played by the state in the politics of race. Both antiforeigner and antiracist political movements invoke the state (and national culture) in their divergent aims of cultural purity and diversity. The fundamental insecurity stemming from the political redefinition of Europe only heightens the tendency of racism to interact with nationalism.

Research on the new racism in Europe, like the literature on race generally, exhibits a bias towards structural and macrosociological analysis. The focus on broad trends and political discourse tends to overlook the ways Europeans interact with and interpret foreigners on a daily basis. It also neglects class and regional variation in the ways people give or do not give political expression to their understandings of race and immigration. In short, what is missing is an ethnography of race in the new Europe in which broad patterns of racial ideology and inequality are examined in regional and class contexts, and in everyday life.

In this dissertation I have tried to contribute to such an ethnography. This study, based on research conducted in Palermo, examines Italian reactions to recent immigration with a focus on the city of Palermo and the region of Sicily. Sicilian responses to immigration were examined by means of two guiding concerns. The first contrasted the ways working-class and bourgeois Palermitans interact with and view recently arrived African and Asian

immigrants. The second focused on the institutions and associations in Palermo that formulate and disseminate paradigms to guide interpretation and action with regard to immigration and immigrant groups. It also contrasted the high degree to which race and immigration are politicized in the Italian North to the apolitical response in the South. In conclusion, I summarize the principal findings of the study and reflect on their significance for Western European trends.

1. "Turks" and "Immigrants of Color"

The few scholars who have investigated the influence of class stratification on views on immigrants in Europe have often described working people as inclined to hostility if not racism by virtue of the competitive pressures workers attribute to immigrants. I therefore began the presentation of my ethnographic data, in Chapter IV, with an examination of the ideas of working Palermitans with regard to immigrants. I too found working people in Albergheria and Zisa concerned with the prospect of competing with *tuichi* for jobs and government attention. Few, however, express racism against immigrants or condone their exploitation, and few seem disposed to support anti-immigrant politics. Working-class appraisals of immigrants are, in general, profoundly ambivalent. On one hand, as former emigrants, working Palermitans sympathize with those who have left home to achieve a tolerable present and

better future. They understand that immigrants generally take only those jobs which Sicilians refuse; and in the case of working people who are also employers, they appreciate the reliability and cheapness of these new workers. On the other hand, working Palermitans exaggerate the negative effect of immigrant employment and they rail at the comparison or equation of themselves with immigrants. They deny that immigrants will contribute through their labor and culture to Italy as Sicilian emigrants contributed to the Italian North, Germany, and the United States. They also portray immigrants as undeserving of the attention of the Italian government--attention which they believe should by rights be given to the national working-class.

The bourgeoisie, in contrast, generally express an unproblematic acceptance of "immigrants of color," if not an explicit antiracism. As I described in Chapter V, students in the samples from an elite lycee and the University of Palermo denounce racism and support the project of a pluralistic Italy in which immigrants and Italians live free of racial division. These views draw on what I have called paradigms of solidarity, particularly as religious universalism and leftist internationalism which hold an influential place in postwar Italian political culture. In particular they draw on ideas developed by the Sicilian intelligentsia concerning the duty of former immigrants to receive new immigrants. In contrast to the

inconsistency and ambivalence of working-class accounts, these students' views express sophisticated political ideologies. I also supplemented the student samples with impressions gained from contacts among professionals. (In the future I plan to strengthen this admittedly small and impressionistic snowball sample with more systematic research.) By broadening analysis to include members of the bourgeoisie in general, however, I found these ideals to be contradicted by the economic dominance over foreign workers, particularly female domestic servants, as well as by ideas about the relative aptitude of different immigrant groups. While working people live without incident with those whom they hesitate to consider their equals, the bourgeoisie lament the racial stigmatization of their servants.

I explained the form and content of working-class and bourgeois views with reference to broad differences in class experience and consciousness, in the context of popular and political culture. The characteristic ambivalence of working people's views on immigrants is structured by insecurity and marginality, on one hand, and the empathy born of emigration and the recognition of shared poverty on the other. Working people in Albergheria and Zisa realize that immigrants, like themselves, are exploited by patronage, undocumented work, and unemployment. They also understand the pain of migration. Peaceful relations between immigrants and Sicilians in the

centro storico, as exemplified by lack of conflict, co-residence, patterns of reciprocity, and occasional intermarriages, moreover attest to local tolerance. At the same time, working people's bitter recognition of their own marginality disposes them to exaggerate the competitive threat of immigrants, and to insist that as Italians and as Europeans they are more deserving of opportunity than Africans and Asians. Their self-understanding as exploited by the system also inclines them to object to state initiatives for immigrants. For working people, the state action with regard to immigrants is unfair because they see themselves as contributing more to the state than immigrants. The bitter realization of their own exploitation moreover makes them fear such action as probable.

The antiracist, pro-immigration stance of the people in the lycee and university samples, in contrast, derives from their basic class security and their understandings of acceptable views on race and immigration. These views are transmitted through higher education and Italian political culture. Politicians and representatives of institutions and associations have drawn on the paradigms of solidarity to promote immigrant rights and denounce racism. The students also draw on ideas concerning Sicilian tolerance as developed by the local intelligentsia. While limited education and exclusion from political culture account for the inconsistencies and the local focus of working-class

opinions, higher education and access to political ideologies explain the consistency and sophistication of student views.

The views of the bourgeoisie on the whole, however, are not unmarked by their own contradictions, the most important of which is that between the ideal of racial equality and the reality of power over immigrant employees, particularly in the home. This exemplifies a general process under capitalism wherein "universalist" ideologies of equality and merit are arrayed in constant tension with the ethnic, racial, and sexual hierarchies of the labor market (Wallerstein 1991). At the same time that they express adherence to progressive ideologies with regard to race and immigration, then, bourgeois Palermitans enjoy access to a pool of reliable domestic servants at a time when the local labor supply in that sector is declining and considered unreliable and unfashionable. Thus the bourgeoisie regard immigration with an equanimity that contrasts with working-class emotion. In contrast to the student samples, most members of the wider bourgeoisie favor the paradigm of labor market rationality by which immigration is regulated to correspond to labor demand. While working people fear immigrants will take their jobs, that the state will concern itself with foreigners and not with them, bourgeois Palermitans accept and employ immigrants.

This study has repeatedly shown that the Sicilian

context figures importantly in the interpretation of immigrants in Palermo, as working people explain their understanding of immigrants in terms of the Sicilian emigrant experience. They rail at their oppressors in Rome and the North, and they take a grim satisfaction in the anti-immigrant violence and politics in the North which expose the immorality of those who belittle them as **terróni**. At the same time the confluence of working-class and southern identity incline working Palermitans to see the immigrant presence as yet another manifestation of the injustice of the system. General Western stereotypes of the miserable Third World and the inferior and different Other, transmitted through popular culture, facilitate this interpretation. But as the use of the term **tuichi** suggests, these stereotypes are engaged only through local knowledge.

The Sicilian context takes on a different meaning in bourgeois assessments of immigrants. The lycee and university students and particularly the local intelligentsia recall not only the emigrant experience but the civilizational history of Arab and Norman Sicily. In this way they would ground the integration of foreigners in historical precedent, and give local resonance to the abstractions of antiracism and diversity which predominate in the Italian debate on immigration. While they are willing to concede to northern critics the existence of local impediments to southern development such as the

mafia, they too point to the concentration of anti-immigrant politics in the North by way of contrast to Sicilian tolerance. The majority of bourgeois Palermitans, however, are not concerned with developing models for integrating immigrants, although they do not hesitate to attribute to themselves a Sicilian form of tolerance. Rather they draw on existing representations of the Other to define foreign **colf** as fashionable and, in some cases, to theorize on the natural aptitudes of different immigrant groups. The fashion for foreign domestics in New Palermo (and indeed all of Italy) is thus created in the interaction of stereotype and employer-employee relations. The structural weakness of foreign workers, as seen in global patterns of inequality and in the precarious legal and economic status of immigrants in Italy, facilitates and empowers this representation.

2. Working-Class Ambivalence and Hostility Towards Immigrants

As I have suggested, the question of a specifically working-class reaction to immigrants has nagged scholars of postwar European migration. In this section I shall consider this question by relating the findings of this study to trends in European working-class reactions and understandings of foreign workers, whether racist or not. At first glance, the profound ambivalence of working Palermitans would seem wholly of a different order from the

"working-class racism" of English workers documented by Annie Phizacklea and Robert Miles (1979, 1980). Yet I argue that the views of these Sicilians relate to most of the key issues of working-class interpretations of foreign labor, namely the ideological portrayal of threat (as opposed to actual competition), the dynamics of working-class insecurity, the designation of foreigners as inferior or undeserving, the centrality of the state, and the structural underpinnings of ambivalence and racism.

As the analysis of the dual labor market shows, local workers' objections to immigrants are grounded not in objective measures of job (and housing) competition. Rather, they represent immigrants as threatening to job security, as well as cheap and reliable workers of lowly jobs. As elsewhere in Europe (and the United States), working people tend to represent foreign workers as threatening because their presence engages general class insecurities and status anxieties. In other words, the portrayal of threat, not competition as such, is the constant, whether in rich California or northern Italy, poor Sicily or depressed England (Van Dijk 1987).

Etienne Balibar has keenly observed:

To the extent, however, that they [workers] project on to foreigners their fears and resentments, despair and defiance, it is not only that they are **fighting competition**; in addition, and much more profoundly, they are trying to escape their own exploitation. It is their hatred of **themselves**, as proletarians--in so far as they are in danger of being drawn back into the mill of proletarianization--that they are showing.

[Balibar 1991e: 214]

Balibar is writing with the experience of industrial Europe in mind. There, the flight of capital, industrial reorganization, and the deskilling of some jobs, as well as the increasing call for flexible and temporary labor, pose real threats to the security of the traditional working class. In Palermo, it is not the fear of losing the security of industrial employment that never was that fuels this self-hatred and fear of immigrants, but rather the exposure of working-class marginality. Yet the comprehension of immigrants shown by working Palermitans has checked the transformation of this self-hatred into the sort of xenophobic and racist rejection of immigrants that Balibar finds in France. My claim is only that in both the French and the Palermo cases, class anxiety and insecurity sharpen this double-sided fear.

Several aspects of this dynamic of self- and other-hate bear elaboration. First, it is clear that the by now familiar forms of worker complaints about foreign workers in Europe--that immigrants receive privileged treatment by government, undercut wages, and take work--turn as much on questions of self-worth and self-definition as on the actions of government and employers. In this portrayal of threat, European workers often counterpoise themselves, as citizens, as contributors to the nation, and as bearers of labor's banner, to the masses from the Third World, which

are seen as undeserving of the largesse of welfare states, if not patently inferior (see also Williams 1989). It is to this dynamic that racism can bring its special efficacy. As an ideology which defines and stigmatizes populations, it provides a compelling explanation for whatever ails a nation or a class, and it shores up native working-class status. As Stuart Hall has suggested, through racism portions of the working class can "live" out their relations to other class factions and thereby to capital itself (Hall 1980: 34). In his interpretation of English working-class racism towards blacks from the colonies, Frank Reeves observes that the "white metropolitan proletariat actually saw itself as an 'aristocracy of labor' in relation to the inferior black people of the colonies" (Reeves 1983: 55). For whites to live and work alongside blacks, then, calls into question putative white superiority. But these English workers express more than just the pinch of competition or the status dilemma occasioned by the fall of empire. Reeves draws on Richard Sennet and Jonathon Cobb's (1977) classic, **The Hidden Injuries of Class**, to locate the themes of sacrifice and contribution in white discourse. The proximity of blacks in economic, residential, and status terms in effect undermines the virtue of white working-class sacrifice. By belittling black success as "unfair" and government-aided, English workers assert the validity of their own sacrifice which once evoked an "aristocracy of labor" but whose

validity is now called into question.

Working Palermitans, for their part, do not "live" out their insecurity with racism. But they do often claim superiority over Africans and Asians by asserting the inferiority of the Third World and the consequent improbability that immigrants can contribute to Sicily as Sicilian emigrants did in New York. In so doing they draw on the general Western stigmatization of the non-West. In this sense the recurrent distinctions drawn in Europe between "North" and "South," "First" and "Third" Worlds, immigrants and nationals, are nothing but recastings of the old division of humanity into the hierarchical dichotomy of "hot" and "cold," progressive and stagnant, societies (Balibar 1991d). This representation, like the racial hierarchies cast in the colonial era, is firmly grounded in inequality.

Second, workers habitually represent their objections to immigrants in terms of national identity. Governments are seen as betraying workers who have contributed to the nation while unfairly privileging foreigners. Thus the slogans of the new racism sound the call to uphold the supposedly imperiled rights of nationals. The National Front in Britain warns that the British are becoming "second-class citizens" in their own country, while across the channel the Front National cries "France for the French." The typical "co-determination" or interdigitation of ideologies of nationalism and racism creates a heady

political rhetoric that is able to draw on cross-class support and shield itself from criticisms of racism (Balibar 1991d; Miles 1989). Workers in Palermo as elsewhere sympathize with immigrants but also accept the claim that government harms nationals by assisting immigrants through legal protections and programs.

At the deepest level, the fundamentally contradictory nature of worker identity in capitalist democracies structures interpretation of foreign workers, whether blatantly racist or ambivalent. Workers, more than any other class, are both free economic participants and subordinates whose lesser merit is manifested in their relative powerlessness to consume (Wolf 1982: 389-90). They are also both free citizens and political subordinates. Workers may therefore align themselves against capital, demanding more wages and different definitions of merit, or compete among themselves for jobs and status, either within sectors of a segmented labor market or across them. While all these options operate simultaneously, this structural ambivalence tends to favor the realities and idioms of competition. This is why the idioms of solidarity in Sicily are contradicted, and in some cases overwhelmed, by representations of threat and competition.

In some circumstances, the structures and idioms of worker solidarity such as unions and class consciousness can serve to counterbalance the more common representation

of foreign workers as threats. For working Palermitans, there are other elements in the balancing act of sympathy and distrust that distinguish their views of foreign workers. Understandings of popular marginality, experience of stigmatization as **terroni** and "Africans," and empathy for immigrants--rather than union-sponsored ideologies of worker internationalism--explain popular tolerance in their case. But the contradictions of southern identity as experienced by poor Sicilians complicate their views of immigrants. For while some Sicilians reject intolerance towards immigrants by rejecting their own stigmatization, others disparage immigrants in the same way that Northerners disparage them. Or, in an essentially negative synthesis of self- and other-presentation, they may reject foreigners as unwanted and inferior because they are "too much like us." In this case working Palermitans' rejection of foreigners differs fundamentally from Northerners' rejection of Southerners in that workers' pejorative assessment of foreigners is a projection of their own insecure self-image.

While the tolerance of working Palermitans may be exceptional or temporary, I suggest that a closer look at European workers' assessments of foreign workers would expose similar patterns of ambivalence. The case of the English workers studied by Phizacklea and Miles is a good example. The authors describe working-class racism as inconsistent, vague, and piecemeal:

[T]he racist explanation for material disadvantage and decline is only one of a number of explanations which are often as vague and inconsistent as the former. Racist beliefs are one element, albeit an important one, of a wider and inchoate political consciousness. [Phizacklea and Miles 1980: 176]

I am neither equating the racism of these English workers with the ambivalence of Palermitans nor claiming European workers' interpretations of foreign labor are identical. Rather, I suggest that the complex dialectic of class consciousness and self-hatred generates a characteristic ambivalence. It is the nature of political mobilization more than economic conditions that determines which side of the dialectic is given priority.

3. Patterns in the Politics of Race and Immigration

In Chapter VI, I took ideas about southern tolerance, developed by Sicilian institutions and associations, as the point of departure for a comparative examination of anti-immigrant politics and violence in Italy. In contradiction to these ideas, a review of events in 1990 showed that the exploitation of foreign workers as well as violence against them occurred throughout the country. At the same time the review lent a certain credence to Sicilian claims. Not only was anti-immigrant political mobilization confined to the North--but so too were Fascist-style violence and intimidation against immigrants and even their Italian supporters. In Sicily, by contrast, a pro-integration

agenda characterized the rather limited political activity on the issue of immigration.

The contrast of the Italian North and South, though simple, points to some of the conditions for this uneven politicization of race and immigration. The concentration of anti-immigrant politics in the rich North and their absence in the poor South, for example, runs counter to the view that racism is a response to economic problems (e.g., Phizacklea and Miles 1980; cf. Van Dijk 1987). Corollary to this is the view that the working classes are structurally disposed to racism (Castles and Kosack 1985, Balibar 1991b, Reeves 1983). Working Palermitans are indeed more hostile to immigration than the bourgeoisie, but they rarely express racist ideology. Instead their view is defined by an ambivalence which balances both fear of competition and empathy for foreigners who must leave family and country to pursue a better life. The repression of popular political participation in the South, which I have called southern anti-politics, further impedes the development of anti-immigrant politics among workers. By contrast it is the petite bourgeoisie in the North, especially the self-employed, who support the Lega Nord and organize anti-immigrant rallies such as the march in Florence.

The uneven politicization of immigration and race is grounded in broad regional differences in political history and culture, as well as economy. In the North, the

traditionally strong Left and the Catholic Church made immigration and race vital national issues from the late 1980s. Drawing on ideologies of secular internationalism and universal religious brotherhood respectively, they set the tone of debate, decrying racism in all its forms and vaunting diversity. They also created structures for immigrants and, along with other partner states in the European Community, prodded the Italian government into passing comprehensive legislation on immigration and refugees. Pro-immigrant activity was especially strong in the "Red Belt" of central Italy, where the former Communist Party (now the Democratic Party of the Left) has been very influential in the postwar period. The attack on immigrants and the merchants' protest during Carnival in Florence transformed this debate. They signalled the beginning of neo-Fascist violence against immigrants which has become increasingly common across Western Europe. More importantly they represented the formation of the new racism in Italy. As Luigi Manconi (1990) has suggested, the merchants' protest initiated a new and legitimate anti-immigrant politics thanks to the approval of the parties opposing the new immigration legislation, who found in the events of Carnival a powerful opening argument against the newly established rights of immigrants. Like the new racism generally, this position seeks legitimacy by repudiating the violence and racism of gangs like the "Goebbels brigade" at the same time that it exonerates such

action as the understandable if regrettable outcome of lenient immigration policy and the perverse promotion of diversity.

The Italian case also illustrates the key role of the state in the politics of race and immigration. Balibar has keenly observed that "modern racism" is above all a "conflictual relationship to the state which is 'lived' and 'projected' as a relationship to the Other" (Balibar 1991c: 15). No party has more successfully attacked the state in Italy than the Lega Nord. By fusing its often justified criticisms of the corrupt state with a virulent anti-southernism, the Lega has created a strident regionalism in which northern taxes, cultural autonomy, and territorial integrity are seen as threatened by Southerners. This ideology of exclusion, invasion, and blame has also created the conditions for the demonization of immigrants as parasitic, unassimilable, and inferior. Unlike the Front National in France or the Republicans in Germany, however, the Lega's main interest is in the reform of the state rather than the dangers of foreigners per se. The future direction of Lega politics with regard to immigrants remains open, especially as it continues to gain in stature and responsibility as the parties that have governed Italy since World War II fall into disrepute.

With regard to the politicization of race and immigration in the South, institutions and associations have shaped debate in the absence of government support and

popular participation. Many have evoked key aspects of the Sicilian experience such as emigration to give resonance to the abstractions of integration, diversity, and antiracism. Significantly, analogous formulations at the national level about the duty incumbent on Italy as a former "country of emigration" do not enjoy a similar purchase on the national conscience. The capacity of this model to give salience to more general themes makes it attractive to the churches, unions, and associations that seek to communicate and persuade.

Ideas about Sicilian tolerance, actual or theoretical, often promote a contrast with the presumed intolerance of the North. While the politics of intolerance are indeed confined to the North, the presence of a pioneering antiracist movement there, as well as the nation-wide abuse of immigrants, contradict Sicilian claims to tolerance. And yet it is true, to an extent, that the Sicilian experience of emigration conditions reactions to immigrants. Many Sicilians, both working-class and bourgeois, say that they could not support anti-immigrant politics given their own emigrant past. I suggest that the absence of such politics also owes much to government inaction with regard to immigrants and to a political system that suppresses popular political mobilization. Because the political system of the South is unlikely to incorporate immigrants as constituents, even if they receive the right to vote in administrative elections as

some have proposed, there is little potential for anti-immigrant politics there. This underlines, once again, the centrality of the state and of political systems more generally. Ironically the most forceful southern political movements such as the anti-mafia struggle seek the active presence of the modern state which northern regionalists would reform and diminish. Italian debate and politics signal that race and immigration will remain vital issues in the new Europe. As European Community integration proceeds, perhaps the key distinction will be between those legally defined as Europeans and those excluded from the benefits of such citizenship.

Appendix

Questionnaire

The following is a translation of the questionnaire, arranged by topic, given to the four samples discussed in Chapters IV and V.

I. Personal and Employment Information

1. Age_____ Sex_____ Education_____
2. Residence (quarter and street)_____
3. Are you presently:
 - a) unemployed_____
 - b) employed occasionally_____
 - c) employed fulltime_____
4. Is your employment status documented?
5. Are you a member of a union? If so, which?_____
6. Occupation of your:
 - Father_____
 - Mother_____
 - Brother(s)_____
 - Sister(s)_____
7. List the occupations of five of your friends.

II. Race and other Evaluations of Immigrants

8. According to you, which of the following phenomena are responsible for the unemployment and lack of industry in Palermo? Place a "1" next to the most responsible, a "2" next to the next most responsible, and so on.
 _____Mafia, _____National government, _____Regional and city government, _____The global economy, _____Palermitans, _____Immigrants.
9. Select a phrase:
 - a) _____A person's race is important and the white race is best; or
 - b) _____A person's race is unimportant.
10. It is probable that many immigrants will remain in Italy and marry Italians. What do you think of this?

11. According to you, immigrants are:
 - a) ☐ More honest and industrious than Sicilians; or
 - b) ☐ Dirty and dangerous; or
 - c) ☐ Like Sicilians.
12. Among the immigrant population, are there some groups that are better or worse than others? Who and why?
13. Do you know an immigrant personally? How? From work, the neighborhood or other circumstances?

(Also see #24)

III. The Labor Market and Immigrant Employment

14. Is there a lot of "black" work in Palermo? If so, who suffers and who benefits?
15. What jobs do immigrants have?
16. Do they suffer exploitation or intolerance? In what form?
17. If you were an employer, would you hire an immigrant? Why or why not?
18. What is the affect of immigrants on the labor market:
 - a) ☐ They do not make a big difference because they take jobs refused by Sicilians; or
 - b) ☐ They take work from us because they accept less pay.
19. If immigrants are paid little, who suffers and who benefits?

IV. Emigrants and Immigrants

20. Why did Sicilians emigrate to America, Germany, northern Italy?
21. What jobs did they hold in these places?
22. Did they suffer exploitation or intolerance? In what form?
23. Have Sicilians in the United States had problems living with other immigrant groups like the Irish, Puerto Ricans, Chinese, and Blacks?
24. There are now in Palermo and throughout Italy immigrants from Africa and Asia. Why have they come?

25. Select a phrase:
a) ___ I agree with regulated immigration in Italy because 27 million Italians went abroad in search of work in this century, and therefore we have a responsibility towards other immigrants; or
b) ___ I do not agree with regulated immigration because immigrants pollute the white race; or
c) ___ I do not agree with regulated immigration because we do not have work ourselves.
26. Select a phrase:
a) ___ In the future immigrants will contribute to the development of Italy through their work, culture, and so on; or
b) ___ In the future immigrants will take resources and we will suffer as a consequence.
27. According to you, was the Italian state irresponsible with regard to its own citizens when it passed the "Martelli law" on immigration? Why?
28. According to you, is Sicilian emigration to the North and to America comparable to immigration from Africa and Asia? Why?

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