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CHANGING GEOGRAPHIES OF CLASS AND GENDER:
EARTHQUAKE RECONSTRUCTION IN WESTERN SICILY AFTER 1968
by
SALLY S. BOOTH

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of
New York

1997

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

CHANGING GEOGRAPHIES OF CLASS AND GENDER:
EARTHQUAKE RECONSTRUCTION IN WESTERN SICILY AFTER 1968

by

Sally S. Booth

Advisor: Professor Jane Schneider

This study, based on anthropological research, examines key aspects of interaction between the state and the local community and between inhabitants and their built environment. After the powerful earthquake of 1968 in western Sicily new relationships were formed between the government and the population of the affected area, the Belice Valley. Previously these villages were poor and relatively isolated. Nucleated peasant settlements were marked by class heterogeneity, expressed in the haphazard mixing of house size and architectural style. Mediterranean ideologies of honor-shame influenced the conservative relations between the sexes and their differential use of public and private space.

In a matter of moments the role of the central government was transformed from a secondary, largely absent entity to an institutional force responsible for rebuilding the streets, the **piazze**, and homes of 100,000 people. The spontaneous emergence of a locally based, cross-class protest movement was organized to demand self-determination and comprehensive reconstruction of settlements supported by productive economic opportunity. The history of

capitalist urban planning and Italian state policy regarding building and zoning reveals efforts to use the built environment to promote the interests of capital and facilitate political control over the citizenry.

Consistent with these aims, the Belice reconstruction involved Modernist new towns, designed and financed exogeneously--settlements arranged to accentuate class differences and inhibit interaction, houses designed to increase consumption and market dependence.

While new town inhabitants largely accepted changing patterns of class formation and residential segregation, they had more complicated reactions to new arrangements of residential space as they influenced gender relations. Some accepted the highly privatized and standardized structures of domestic space provided by the state, while others risked penalty to modify this space to better accommodate traditional expectations associated with neighborhood work patterns and social networks of women. Still others rejected new towns altogether and moved to rural peripheries. Inhabitants' responses to the reconstruction of their settlements demonstrate the important interactions between power relations of class and gender and the continually changing built environment.

Acknowledgments

Institutions, teachers, informants, colleagues, friends, and family have assisted and encouraged me in this endeavor. I gratefully acknowledge the generous financial support provided by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Sigma Xi, and the Fulbright program for graduate study. I would like to thank Luigi Filadoro, in Rome, for his kind help. And in Palermo, Douglas Barnes (of USIS) and Mary Benton gave me good practical advice as well as friendship.

It is my great good fortune to have studied with a number of distinguished anthropologists. As an undergraduate at Sarah Lawrence College I learned from Irving Goldman and Joyce Riegelhaupt to see the world through the lens of the anthropologist. Joyce Riegelhaupt encouraged me to pursue graduate study and taught me lessons of bravery and commitment in the face of adversity. Her death was a great loss to the discipline and to the community of her friends, to which I consider myself fortunate to have belonged.

The short time I spent at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst was long on inspiration. Martin Wobst, Bob Paynter, John Cole, and David Alexander forged an environment for intellectual growth and exchange.

At the CUNY Ph.D. Program in Anthropology I benefitted from the example and instruction of number of scholars,

including Jane Schneider, Leith Mullings, Eric Wolf, and Edward Hansen. Jane Schneider and Leith Mullings provided encouragement at each step of my graduate training. Michael Blim and Sharon Zukin were thoughtful outside readers for the dissertation.

I acknowledge a profound debt to Jane Schneider. My first exposure to Sicily came as a babysitter for Jane and her husband Peter. As a research assistant and fledgling anthropologist I have continued to learn much from them about Sicily, about fieldwork, about anthropology, and about life. I thank Jane and Peter for inviting me to accompany them to Sicily, for sharing their dear friends and full table with me, and for the company of their children, Ben and Julie. I cannot imagine my own career without the kind support of Jane Schneider.

In Sicily, people were very very good to me. Pasquale Marchese is the most valuable and generous friend a student of Sicily could enjoy. His wit and knowledge of all things Sicilian make him the perfect guide to the island. With kindness he, Elena Paparcone, and his son, Vincenzo Marchese, embraced me and my family, offering a bed, a place by the fire, a plate of warm soup, and grilled sardines in the winter and a refreshing splash in his irrigation pool (with frogs) in the summer.

Many people in the Belice Valley contributed to this project. They spent long hours helping me understand the experience of the earthquake and reconstruction of their

towns, the pleasures and disappointments of a changing Sicily, and the importance of their particular histories and cultures. Their hospitality and patience reflects a commitment to their communities. I make special mention of Ina Abbadessa and Vincenzo Ognibene, Guiseppina and Olindo Terrana, Franca Spatafora and Salvatore Laudicina, Franca's mother Signora Spatafora, Maria Sciamè, Fara Meija, Maria Amoroso and her departed husband Giacomo Avila. My research was the beneficiary of Giacomo's enthusiasm for local history. We sorely feel his absence. We found friendship and the sense of home with Mary Taylor Simeti and her husband Tonino and her children Natalia and Francesco. We remember fondly fine meals and conversation at Bosco. My understanding of architecture and reconstruction would be poorer without the scholarship and hospitality of Francesco Ventura, the insight and wry humor of Vincenzo Ognibene, and the practical expertise and generous assistance of Olindo Terrana.

Many people in the Calatafimi Town Hall, especially in the Technical Office and the Civil Records Office, were helpful and encouraging. Antonella Agueli, Marcella Pampalone, Serafina Cataldo, and Giovanni Gerbino deserve special acknowledgment for their southern hospitality and tireless assistance. The librarians Franca Spatafora and Giovanni Bruccoleri were helpful in providing much information on the history of Calatafimi. We have Giovanni Mazara to thank for finding us an apartment. Our

neighbors, Rosario and Enza Guicciardo and their children, Angela and Guiseppina, brightened our spirits. The people of Calatafimi gave freely of their time and information, and made our stay memorable. I feel a deep gratitude to all calatafimari.

Throughout this project I have been sustained by friends and colleagues. Gregg Horowitz has always been the kind of friend and scholar I hope to be; his interest and enthusiasm have nurtured my intellectual curiosity. My dear friends from childhood, Alix Kuhn Bower and Robin Maxwell, have supported me with companionship and good cheer. Alix and Robin paid me a great honor by visiting me in the field. From Robin's engrossing stories I have caught the bug for foreign travel. Dody Lewis has always believed in me, showing unfailing support when I doubted my endeavors. Other dear friends and colleagues on whom I depend greatly and much enjoy are Dave Maynard, D. Christopher Leonard, and Richard Hara. Malve von Hassell has been a good friend and fine colleague; our conversations have always pushed me to pursue new projects with confidence.

Moving to Sag Harbor, New York to write about the destruction and reconstruction of Sicilian villages and society, I was taught about community and the place of friends right here in our new home. I have the following people to thank for this important lesson: Brenda Overstrom and Steve Coleman, Gigi Morris and Bob Plumb, and Carol Williams.

I could not have finished this research without my family. My late mother, Jocelyn Bower Booth and my father Charles Frazier Booth, have freely given me the love and kindness necessary for me to embark upon and complete this project (and all the other important ones!). Their confidence in me always propelled me forward to distant places, their warm friendship with me always kept me close. My mother's keen eye and my father's sociability and curiosity imprinted an anthropological sensibility on me early on. To them I give all my loving thanks.

To my husband, Jeffrey Eugene Cole, I offer my deepest admiration and fondest gratitude. He has given me all the essential love, commitment, and companionship for a rich life shared fully. We discarded our duplicate books and plunged together into anthropology, into a passion for Sicily, into the creation of a family, with Jocelyn and Sammy. For his warmth, patience, dignity, and good humor I remain forever grateful. He most generously provided assistance as an excellent anthropologist, a fine editor, a skilled computer technician, a great cook, and a loving husband and father at every stage of this project. It is to him and our dear children, Sammy Starbuck Cole and Jocelyn May Cole, that I dedicate this work. They vastly enrich my life with meaning and love.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

People's expectations of housing are intimately linked to ideas of privacy and social life, to class position and the economic fortunes of the household. Gender roles, work patterns, and the developmental cycle of the family are also tangled up with residential aspirations. When an outside source, such as an employer or government housing agency, is granted control over the design, construction, and regulation of housing, the domestic realm changes in significance. No longer under the assumed control of inhabitants and village ordinances, the home environment can usher the outside world inside in new and unexpected ways.

The house can become an avenue for the expression of state power or a means by which commercial interests can shape people's daily lives to create market-based needs; it can affect gender roles and family size. Arrangement of the houses in relation to one another can influence patterns of social interaction between different groups based on occupation, class, or gender. The house can furthermore act as an homogenizing influence, reducing local differences and facilitating dissemination of national or international culture and standards.

Under normal circumstances people take their built environment--the spaces of production, exchange, and consumption--for granted. They live in it without questioning its form, its design, its boundaries. It looks immutable and fixed, consisting of concrete and walls, right angles and rigid foundations. Everyday consciousness is usually distracted by the more changeable, lively issues of interpersonal, social, and political exchange. The built environment appears to be a mere locale where everything else unfolds. Few of those laboring in workshops, offices, or factories consider how spatial arrangements of work reflect employers' attempts to manipulate the workforce and labor process. It is uncommon for one sitting in a park to recognize that the design and location of the park bench is designed to shape patterns of social contact. It is rare that people ask themselves how the location of their kitchens may influence their relations with their spouses, children, or neighbors.

Despite this quiet pervasiveness, the taken-for-grantedness of the built environment breaks down at certain times. Urban renewal and new town construction are two obvious examples of abrupt change that can elicit conscious responses of inhabitants. Disasters--natural and those caused by human action--that damage and destroy the built environment and require repair and reconstruction, often serve as a powerful catalyst, compelling inhabitants to question the important but frequently overlooked

relationship between that environment and patterns of social and political life. Just such a catalyst was the earthquake of 15 January 1968 in the Belice Valley of western Sicily. Six towns were destroyed (two were totally levelled) and eight others were badly damaged (see Figure 1; all figures follow in the Appendix).

Research in the Belice town of Calatafimi sheds light on the intricate ways in which the built environment of the home and town is connected to the political, social, and personal experience of the inhabitants. I spent most of 1988 and some of 1990 in the Belice Valley studying the process of reconstruction following the powerful earthquake.

During earlier visits to the area during the 1980s I noticed dramatic changes occurring in the long process of rebuilding towns and houses. Sicilian friends, especially the older ones, described the earthquake as the metaphorical dividing line between the past and the present. While much of the discussion dividing "then" from "now" involved changes common throughout Western Europe at the time, people who were affected by the earthquake and reconstruction seemed to feel singularly victimized. They spoke about their lives as somehow out of their own control, as though shaped and determined in large part by the earthquake and its aftermath. All the social and political turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s was seen through the lens of the 1968 disaster. Thus, I returned to Sicily

curious about the particular ways in which people's lives had changed in the course of reconstruction. I was also curious about locating the forces behind the reconstruction and understanding the process of decision-making, which seemed so beyond the control of the inhabitants.

My analysis of the earthquake reconstruction seeks to describe the actions and points of view of both Belice inhabitants and the government agencies that oversaw the building. In thinking about the role of the state, I draw freely from the interdisciplinary work of David Harvey, Manuel Castells, Michel Foucault, and others. Sometimes called social geographers, they urge us to see space as not merely the site of human activity but intrinsic to it. Harvey, for instance, sees the built environment, as shaping and shaped by production, circulation, and consumption and therefore as fundamental to the exercise of power.

I therefore ask of the reconstruction the following questions. Why had the new settlements been designed as they were? Who was responsible for the design, financing, and construction of the new and unfamiliar environments? And, what had been the intentions and rationale guiding the decisions made in reconstructing houses and towns? As it was primarily the central government that directed the reconstruction of the Belice Valley, this approach involved questions of state power, or more specifically, the ways the government exercises its will through control of the

new and rebuilt towns. This typically involves the use of urban planning--the provision of public services and physical and social infrastructure, the imposition of national hygienic regulations, and the exercise of regional, city, and town zoning laws and building codes.

In the case of the Belice reconstruction, the national and regional governments undertook total responsibility for planning, by designing, building, assigning, and regulating all components of public and private built space in the new and rebuilt towns. Although local governments ultimately approved or refused individual town plans, their role was limited in scope and they were uninvolved with the actual planning. Hence, I consider the earthquake reconstruction as a physical manifestation of state power on the local level as expressed through the politics of urban planning.

The more pressing anthropological questions involve the inhabitants' responses to the earthquake, their role in the process of reconstruction, and their expectations of and reactions to state decisions regarding their new towns and houses. I am interested in the particular issues that mobilized people into different political configurations. What circumstances brought inhabitants together into regionally based political groups? What issues broke them apart into divisive factions as they responded in divergent ways to the state's reconstruction decisions? How did the design of new spaces of town and home affect patterns of class interaction and gender relations? What were the

inhabitants' opinions regarding these changes? Finally, I question why, and in what specific ways, inhabitants have alternatively embraced and rejected the changed relationships between the built environment and their everyday lives.

The tools of ethnography allow me to describe and explain these differing reactions. Participant-observation reveals different patterns of response and reaction on the part of inhabitants to the changing environment. Local records of public debates regarding new town site choices, the extensive documentation of building permits and zoning requests, as well as questionnaire results provided a background against which I could evaluate the impressionistic data. Together with interviewing and archival research, participant-observation revealed the complex combination of inhabitants' reactions to the spatial environment--acceptance, opposition, rejection, and alteration in conscious and unconscious ways--that find final expression in the processes of daily life.¹

Immediately after the earthquake, Belice inhabitants developed a cohesive, regional protest movement directed against the government's reconstruction plans. They called

1. From a more personal perspective, my own experience finding an apartment, negotiating with the landlord and his aged aunt (the nominal owner) settling in, and forming friendships and antagonisms with my neighbors taught me a great deal about western Sicilian housing. Neighborhood politics, patronage, the importance of class posturing, as well as expectations regarding gender roles and housework all emerged in the course of this real estate transaction.

for a new productive economy rebuilt to match the rebuilding of residence and consumption services. Over the years, the protest faded as individual families finally received housing and as the state failed to engage the movement.

People's reactions to the new spaces have varied considerably. In general, self-determination over the domestic environment has related to class and homeownership. Middle-class homeowners enjoyed more autonomy, while the poor and propertyless have found themselves in better lodgings but subjected to segregation in isolated state-subsidized housing. The new homes have also affected the gendered nature of space, particularly the work and social areas of women. Most women have sought to modify new domestic spaces, either through alteration or relocation.

In this study I use anthropological research to examine key aspects of interaction between the state and the local community and between inhabitants and their built environment. In the remainder of this chapter, I describe the fieldsite and address issues of reconstruction. Chapter II offers general description of the Belice Valley before and after the earthquake. Examining the different reconstruction trajectories followed by five different towns in western Sicily provides an overview of the regional consequences of the event. Several themes emerge from the findings, each directly related to the

population's experience of the new housing and settlements and the changing relationships between the inhabitants and the state. The local political opposition and mobilization of a protest movement against the state is described in Chapter III. In Chapter IV, I address the theoretical treatments regarding social relations of power and the built environment. The particular influences of Italian state policy and urban planning are scrutinized in Chapter V. New patterns of residential segregation and class formation are discussed in Chapter VI. In Chapter VII, I address the changing definitions and behavior associated with the politics of gender in the new architectural environments of post-earthquake settlement. Conclusions follow in Chapter VIII, with emphasis on the dynamic interchanges between the state and the inhabitants that orient the dissertation: citizens' protest movements and altered relations with the central state, new patterns of segregation, and changing spatial arrangements of gender and social life.

The significance of this study should go beyond the relatively small region in Sicily's western interior, and even beyond issues of reconstruction after disaster. The built environment, the architecture of buildings and towns and the cultural landscape, must be part of any analysis of society. Looking at our constructed spaces requires us to grapple with issues of ideology and power. For example, gender inequality will vary in a built environment that

allows men and women to work or socialize together from one that separates them in the course of their actions.

Likewise, relations between the classes will be influenced by constraints and possibilities of the built environment. Integrating spatial components in the anthropological perspective rounds out our disciplinary claims of holism. Attention to changing material culture allows us to more adequately address issues of political and social dynamics and culture transformation.

2. THE FIELDSITE

Nestled along a hilly ridge, the town of Calatafimi is surrounded by terraced fields of grapes on three sides and a flat valley floor planted with wheat on the fourth. This town served as the principal research site and home for me and my husband for the year of 1988. Calatafimi is an average-sized agricultural community, or agrotown, located in the northwestern province of Trapani, Sicily. It is an agglomerated settlement of 8500 residents, urbane in character with concentrated row housing that spreads from the ruins of a tenth-century fort at the North to the hilltop Christian cemetery at the South (see Figure 2). The town feels crowded, its two square kilometers packed solid with old and new buildings, alley-ways, courtyards, winding streets, **piazze**, and a small public garden with some barely tended greenery.

Unlike some other settlements in the agricultural interior of western Sicily, the architecture of Calatafimi is unremarkable. The town lacks the dramatic sweep of a main **corso** lined with palm trees and monumental buildings, gracefully punctuated with **piazze** that become both part of the nearby buildings and of the streets. It lacks the ornate churches with fanciful baroque facades. The residential architecture is rather insignificant; while richer people have bigger homes with more light and comfortable arrangements, the drive along the main **corso** is nowhere highlighted by the grand palaces found in the more important rural towns. Alluding to the aristocratic Gattopardo (Leopard) family of Lampedusa's (1960) novel, a friend from Calatafimi joked self-critically: "Here there are no **gattopardi**, only **gatti**." That is, there are no powerful leopards, only ragged alley cats in this town.

In contrast to some of the larger and richer agrotowns, a degree of homogeneity in architectural style characterized Calatafimi before the earthquake struck in 1968. In other towns the wealthy lived in close proximity to the poor, and residential luxury of expansive size and embellished design existed in marked difference from the small, dank shelters nearby. In Calatafimi the class differences were not so dramatic, nor were they accentuated by ostentatious features of architectural distinction. Instead, rich and poor lived side by side in housing

distinguished by little but size, light, and interior furnishings.

Before the earthquake, the impoverished majority of Calatafimi and other Belice towns lived in hovels--low-ceilinged one or two room units often occupied by both the nuclear family and the mule. In the prewar period, indoor plumbing was largely unknown, sleeping areas were perched in a corner alcove in the main room or atop the main table, and the only source of heat was the open fire (Valussi 1968). Consumer goods were extremely limited. Old people tell stories of deprivation; children played with sticks and pebbles or maybe an old tire while the total inventory of family furniture might be limited to a table, two hard chairs, and a chest for bed linens and blankets. The very few automobiles in town were used only on special occasions.²

In the past, most agricultural laborers struggled to combine subsistence work on their own tiny fragmented lots (attained through inheritance, sharecropping, or rental) with sporadic work on middle-sized farms. The big absentee landowners (and their **gabelloti** land managers) common in the richer agricultural flatlands of Sicily's interior were largely absent in Calatafimi. In Calatafimi most were poor and the hilly, rocky land was excessively fragmented. The

2. Local people were unaccustomed to the motion of the automobile. In the early 1960s a whole wedding party was struck down with car-sickness and nausea after driving to a nearby scenic spot for the ceremonial snapshots (personal communication, Jane and Peter Schneider).

most wealthy residents were the middle-sized farmers who shared a similar lifestyle to that of their laborers and neighbors, despite the greater landholdings in the town and country. A variety of land-tenure and real estate arrangements linked the classes together, ranging from basic sharecropping to an exchange of labor or cash for housing.

The history of poverty is remembered carefully with a sense of wonder at their own experience of change. Many proudly recollected the crush of people and animals sleeping in the dirt-floored house, or the ways an enterprising housewife could stretch out even a tiny bit of food for many days. Bread wiped across a bit of anchovy nailed to a scrap of wood served to spice up an otherwise measly and unvaried diet. Together the hard and insecure work of the fields and the deprived conditions of daily life were the basis of *la miseria*, the defining and hated "misery" of the Sicilian peasant.

The contrast today could not be greater. In this century emigration has brought about important changes in the local economy. And rapid urbanization and access to higher education have combined to promote even more dramatic transformations in the economy and society of western Sicily. Health regulations and building codes, as well as massive state financing of reconstructed housing, have created new residential environments in the Belice towns. Houses are big, they are many, and they reflect

urban European standards of residence. The domestic realm is no longer merely a place to retire after work, nor is the house seen primarily as a property resource to be passed down to one's offspring. It has become an expression of cosmopolitan ideals, a physical manifestation of new economic fortunes, an investment to be saved, bought, or sold. Expectations regarding the standards of consumption have risen vertiginously high very quickly.

America ca semmu, or "This **here** is America" they told me again and again in dialect. "You don't need to come all the way from the United States to study **us**; we have reached levels of civilization equal to or beyond the riches of America!" Indeed, for many, **civiltà** or civility, was measured in direct correlation with the ability to consume. All agreed a new level of **benessere** has been attained in western Sicily. **Benessere**, literally "well-being," or figuratively, the comfortable lifestyle, is associated with the sharp rise in wealth and consumption capacities.³

Many in the Belice now possess big houses with tiled floors of Ferrara marble and skylights designed by prestigious firms in the United States. Some of these Sicilians delay marriage until they can afford fine furniture sets imported from Scandinavia. They buy fashions from Milan and eat sumptuous meals at restaurants with friends and families. They tell me that a house of

3. Donald Pitkin (1985) has chronicled this surge in wealth and residential possibilities in **The House That Giacomo Built**.

120 square meters is minimally sufficient for a family of four but would prefer something larger. Children of different sexes should not be forced to share bedrooms any more, they say. Many have two cars; the ideal arrangement is a small Fiat 500 for town driving and a bigger Alfa Romeo or a German make for highway cruising.

While nearly all of those living in the Belice Valley inhabit new residential environments and have attained more sanitary and regulated domestic standards, the new wealth has not been equitably distributed.⁴ Some families have been able to take advantage of the new state investments in the Belice region to attain their housing ideals, but others have been largely excluded from the consumption binge. This contrast reflects different levels of state involvement in housing for the different classes. People who were more economically secure at the time of the earthquake, owning their own homes, have received financial contributions from the government to repair or rebuild their houses in the old town center (see Figure 2) or in the new zone of Sasi (see Figure 3). Large single-family villas have been built; they are easily distinguished by modern architectural style and detail, fancy grillwork gates, and modern security systems with intercoms. By contrast, the poor and unemployed are often still dependent

4. The class structure today in Italy overall is much like that of the United States, with great income disparity between a very small group of the very rich and a much larger (and growing) group of the poor (**New York Times** 17 April 1995).

as tenants; they no longer exchange or rent privately owned houses and apartments scattered throughout the town but now inhabit state-owned housing. These government residential projects are marked by stylistic uniformity and locational isolation from other neighborhoods. Their residents share the stigma of low status in the eyes of the town at large.

There is a third housing alternative represented in the reconstructed towns. People too young to own houses at the time of the earthquake have formed cooperatives with others sharing occupational and class similarities. They take advantage of government sponsored loans that carry low interest rates. Cooperative housing projects fall somewhere between public housing of the poor and individual private housing of the better off. While the exteriors are uniform in style, inhabitants have some say over the interior arrangements. The cooperatives are spatially concentrated, but they are not relegated to the periphery of the settlement. While not regarded as prestigious, they by no means connote the poverty and inferior status of public housing projects. The new structures of housing as well as the unfamiliar designs of the new town plans remind us that the changes in lifestyle influence nearly all aspects of life for Belice inhabitants.

3. THE HOUSE THAT ROBERTO BUILT AND MARGARITA REBUILT

My husband, Jeffrey E. Cole, and I left Sicily at the end of 1988, sad to leave our friends and fieldsite, eager

to examine and process the great amount of data gathered during our stay. People had been so very helpful, forthcoming with information, materials, and personal accounts. We were pleased to return a year later, this time with our baby, Sammy Cole, in tow, to check on our conclusions and further investigate some unfinished topics.

An impressionistic account of our later visit to the fieldsite illustrates some issues regarding the changing patterns of work and politics, the new arrangements of space and gender, and the enormous transformations of daily life in Calatafimi as influenced by the reconstruction. Upon our return in 1990 we hurried to visit an informant-friend. He lived with his family at Sasi, the new settlement which broke ground in 1979, 11 years after the earthquake. About a mile from the still-inhabited old town, it is spread out over what were once extensive wheat fields and sheep pastures. Scrubby, poorly tended agricultural holdings surround the scattered settlement of two- and three-storied cement structures. We knew the partially built town well from our previous stay in Calatafimi.

We reached Sasi over an ultra modern, four-lane highway, elevated high over hilly cultivated terrain by an elaborate network of pilons and girders. Our large German rental car was well suited for the smooth super highway, but we were delayed. In front of us was an old peasant couple and their mule. The gentleman rode the animal down

the center of the highway while the old lady trotted stiffly behind holding tightly to the beast's tail. This obstacle was but one example of the glaring contradictions of daily life in the Belice Valley, contradictions that were intensified by the earthquake and reconstruction. We had learned to take these incongruous aspects of Sicilian life for granted during our fieldwork the previous year; we were as muddled as the inhabitants by the newness of it all. But on our return, the incongruities were thrown in sharp relief.

We had passed mule and masters often during research in 1988. Like the inhabitants of Sasi, we commuted frequently between the crowded, lively old town center and the empty, dusty, and quiet new town still under construction. One of my primary informants, Roberto, his wife Margarita, and their three children, had been among the first families to move down to the new settlement in the mid-1980s. An architect, Roberto had designed the apartment complex in which they lived. Composed of 30 housing units, it was organized around a vast empty courtyard bristling with wild scrub grasses. The ground floor was reserved for garages, outdoor parking, and covered walkways leading to individual stairwells. Shadowing over the walkways and the garage, which Roberto's family used for storage of personal items and food stuffs,

were the living quarters of the first floor.⁵ This floor had consisted of an adjacent living room-dining room area and an **angolo cottura** or "cooking corner," a bathroom, a laundry closet, a study-office and two bedrooms.

Despite the cramped space, the house was tidy and the family always very hospitable. When we visited--inevitably for meals or coffee and pastries, since Sicilian hospitality is so closely tied to food sharing--we sat in the living room while Margarita moved between the dining room table and the cooking corner preparing the meal. It was crowded, and my job was often simply finding places to put things as the work table was transformed for eating and entertaining. This same juggling act of space and purpose was performed for sleeping arrangements. The older daughter slept on the fold-out couch in her father's study-office, while the two younger children shared the room across from the master bedroom.

We got to know the family well in the course of abundant Sunday lunches, picnic outings to the scorching beaches, late night suppers and evenings out for pizza. Roberto did most of the talking. Always aware of my interests, he spoke of his architectural ideas, his training background in urban planning, the impact of the earthquake on housing and settlement structure, the hopes

5. The system of enumerating the floors of a building differs in Italy, where the "ground floor" (**piano terreno**) is called just that and the "first floor" (**primo piano**) sits above it, equivalent to our second floor.

and dreams he and others had harbored for the Belice reconstruction. Like all those linked to the reconstruction in some official capacity, he had to be prodded to talk of the harsher realities of continuing delays and incompleted projects obstructed by corruption and petty politics.

I learned a lot from less structured discussions with his wife as well. I was never permitted to help with the dishes; I suspect we could not have fit together in the **angolo cottura**. (I still wonder if their very modern dishwasher has ever been used in that drought ridden area). So, after the fine meal and stacking up the dishes, Margarita and I would often retire to the back balcony for a surreptitious cigarette.

From this perch, all sorts of complicated ironies related to the changing settlement and standards of consumption were visible, especially with regard to the new settlements. From the balcony in Sasi, one can survey the open panorama. To the northwest it is possible to catch a glimpse of the distant old town, a corner of the hilltop cemetery, the edge of town where some peasants still winnow their grain on an open threshing floor and crush their grapes in a mule driven press.

Surrounding Roberto's building are distinctly marked housing types, each occupying a different area of the new settlement: the private row-houses owned by those who had owned damaged housing in the old town, the semi-public

cooperative housing of state employees, and the public housing projects of the poor referred to as "il Bronx." Visible too are the structures scattered in the surrounding countryside, the villas for summer **villeggiatura** (holiday homes) and the farm complexes, or **bagli**, of run-down stone huts and make-shift pens for sheep and goats. These dramatic contrasts in housing--the new and old, the modern urbane and the antique rustic, the rich and the poor, the permanent and the seasonal--are combined with contrasts of lifestyle and experience. Neighbors of our friends Roberto and Margarita include a youth studying computer science at the university and a crusty shepherd lightly ridiculed for not knowing a word of Italian, an agronomist summering with his family, and the young wife of an emigrant living with her in-laws until her husband returns from Germany with money to build their own house.

Looking out over Sasi and the rolling hills beyond, listening to the tinkle of sheep bells barely audible over the kids' rock-and-roll next door, Margarita would start to talk about her experiences. Ordinarily it was quite difficult to get her to open up. When not working as a clerk in a village office or chaffeuring her children back and forth between town and Sasi, Margarita was busy entertaining her husband's friends and associates. There was a tendency to let the architect hold forth, even when questioned about women's views on kitchens or balconies. Only upon seeing a local magazine story (Booth 1988) in

which I had quoted her did she become comfortable and start to express her opinions to me.

While she could be brooding and resentful, Margarita's mood changed on these quiet evenings on the balcony. She would dream aloud of starting a business designing childrens' clothing, of quitting her office job to spend more time with her family, of her impressions of the feminist movement and how it had influenced her while bypassing the lives of many in town. She was especially animated when talking about the house and her ambitions for changing it. Knowing I was particularly interested, she loved talking about the modifications they would make on their apartment. It was like speculating about what one would do upon winning the lottery.

Or so I thought. In the short year that we had been back in the United States, Roberto and Margarita had carried out many of their ambitious plans.

When we returned to visit them at Sasi we were surprised to find Roberto emerging from the garage. Proudly, he ushered us in through a side-door we had never previously noticed. Inside was an elegant office in which space for a desk, bookshelves, and drafting tables had been carved out of a once dark, cavernous storage area. Roberto's assistant waved down from a drafting table in a loft area, suspended over shelves and file cabinets. The floor was carpeted, the walls were hung with nicely-framed architectural diagrams of houses and apartment complexes,

and hanging steel lamps of high-tech design illuminated the corners.

After the tour of the new office, we went upstairs to visit with the rest of the family. The living room-dining area was strangely empty. Usually the site of noisy kid antics and Margarita's chores, it was quiet as we entered. Andrea was in her room: what had been the architect's study-office was now unmistakably the room of a teenager, complete with posters and a stereo. From the noises and aroma it was clear that Margarita was cooking, but the cooking corner was vacant. She called down to me from upstairs. This area had been originally designed as a laundry room and roof-top balcony, following the zoning regulations that stipulate the quasi-outdoor use of the partial third floor. We climbed a wrought-iron spiral staircase to find that they had closed in part of the roof-top terrace for a new kitchen, large enough to accommodate work space, appliances, and a table for dining. Glass doors led out on to the terrace, surrounded by a waist high wall, three stories up.

Margarita was as happy as I had ever seen her. "It's like a kitchen of a country house" she explained proudly, "it's big, both inside the kitchen and outside on the terrace." The two younger children were visible through the big doors, playing on the terrace as she prepared a fabulous meal for our welcoming. She moved around the open space easily, from the sink and stove to the table, all the

while explaining how and why they had made the modifications, reserving the downstairs **angolo cottura** for laundry while moving the everyday life of the family up to this terrace floor. She had modified the design of her husband's project to better accommodate her needs and aspirations.

Later, reflecting on that first night back, we marvelled at the dramatic contrasts of daily life in the Belice. These people's lives have moved worlds away from the experiences of their parents and grandparents. Some, like Margarita and Roberto are fortunate enough to be able to both value aspects of traditional life and recreate them in the new built environment of reconstruction.

They no longer labor in the fields of a landlord, hired daily in a humiliating line-up in **piazza** by the labor boss and estate manager, the infamous **gabelloto**. Totally eschewing the agricultural past, some hold higher-paying and secure office jobs, while others work in a construction industry grown vigorous during the reconstruction. Some are employed in the new wineries (**cantine**) built with financing from the regional government. Many others are unemployed or underemployed, getting by (**arrangiarsi**) by patching together a combination of activities and state assistance.

The social boundaries are different as well for the post 1968-generation. It is true that elders venerate the provincial, close-knit character of the small town; a

parent of a young professional complained to us, in Palermo he felt unknown, "just another ant crawling along the streets." This prewar generation, many of whom were forced to leave town as migrants or soldiers, tend to value the slow, familiar pace of the small towns. By contrast, young people are interested in the world beyond. Roberto and his friends are cosmopolitan and curious; his daughter and her friends are even more so. Through television, vacation travel, and higher education, they are exposed to an alternative version of the outside world. They aspire to international models of culture and consumption.

While indices reflect an increase in all-around living standards in western Sicily, housing standards in particular have risen dramatically in the twenty years since the earthquake. The house has assumed new importance as an expression in material culture of economic status, a "translation on the ground" of changing economic fortunes, an embodiment of new social position (Markus 1993: 26).

4. RECONSTRUCTION AS A CASE STUDY

The post-earthquake reconstruction effort raises questions of interpretation. Some scholars view earthquakes, floods, and other destructive natural phenomena as "events" rather than "disasters" (e.g. Lees and Bates 1984). They argue that national attention and economic development can emerge in the course of reconstruction, leaving the area in a more advantageous

position than it was before the dramatic occurrence. While it is true that the problems in western Sicily received sudden and widespread recognition after the earthquake, evaluating the impact of this attention is rather more complicated. Renaming a disaster an "event" because people may be better off materially distracts us from a more complex reality that involves the destruction of people's homes, communities, and land. Although this perspective appears to speak to the western Sicilian situation, it in fact obscures the negative impact associated with the increase in national attention and material wealth.⁶

Following the lead of Marxian social theorists, I propose that reconstruction constitutes a massive intervention on the part of the state into people's lives. The Belice earthquake can be treated as a heuristic moment, a perspective from which to examine changes in state power and local reactions in the course of settlement reconstruction. In a matter of moments the role of the central government was transformed from a secondary, largely absent entity to an institutional force responsible for rebuilding the streets, **piazze**, and homes of 100,000 people. While western Sicilians had previously prided themselves on their minimal involvement with and independence from the government, from 15 January 1968

6. Gabriella Gribaudi (1981) argues that the 1980 earthquake in the Naples area brought national attention to the whole Mezzogiorno and served as an occasion for forming and elaborating upon stereotypes of the Italian North and South.

onwards, they had to rely on the state for everything from toilet paper and soup to housing and jobs. The government could rapidly determine the movement and placement of the population. It could decree the existence or abandonment of cities and towns. It was empowered to expropriate urban and rural land and influence real estate values. As Agostino Renna, architect and social theorist puts it, the local economic and political structure was fully subsumed by the state's control over agriculture, construction, commerce, and real estate (Renna 1979: 98).

In its central role in reconstruction, the state was in a position to influence all levels of people's lives from the size of their bedrooms to their capacity to socialize easily with neighbors. Inhabitants' ability to alter their domestic environment, to tile their floors or change the line of a wall, fell under new regulatory authority. In the process of designing houses and towns, state planners were in a position to manipulate the movements of people across space and time and influence the patterns of their interaction.

The disjuncture and conflict between those who planned and designed the new towns and those who came to inhabit them was exacerbated by the structure of decision-making established by the central government. A single state office, the Ispettorato generale per le zone terremotate (Inspectorate General for the Earthquaked Zones), was set up to direct and manage all aspects of reconstruction.

There was no place for inhabitants' contributions in the objectives and methods of the Ispettorato reconstruction office. The participation of future inhabitants in the planning of new towns was excluded at every level. Of all the friends, acquaintances, and informants with whom I spoke, not a single one had been consulted or involved in the planning of their new towns. (I do not include here the architects and bureaucrats I sought out specifically because of their active roles in reconstruction.) Thus, settlement transformation in the Belice Valley reconstruction was largely exogenous, at least in its initial phases.

The economic context of the Belice reconstruction recalls Harvey's (1981) model of capitalist urban development. In Italy there was an economic crisis of overproduction combined with recession in the late 1960s. To extricate capital from this crisis, government policy aimed to revitalize and remodernize the industries of big northern-based corporations and to revamp financial markets by exporting capital outside of Italy. New patterns of capital concentration, the elimination of small and medium firms, and the erosion of newly achieved workers' rights and benefits represented a massive reorganization of the Italian economy.

Despite widespread recognition of the continuously growing economic disparity between North and South, there was little done in the course of the economic restructuring

of the 1960s and 1970s to even out regional imbalances. A strategy to shore up the large industrial firms of the North was pursued at the expense of establishing a productive economic basis in the South, the underdeveloped Mezzogiorno (De Bonis 1979: 129). Could the state have adopted a policy to combine economic development with the reconstruction of the Belice towns, and in so doing addressed structural imbalances of the Italian economy? Notwithstanding politicians' promises and assurances to redress the problems associated with inequality and underdevelopment, real efforts to close the gulf between the rich North and the poor South were in fact minimal or non-existent.

The state instead acted to resolve the crisis of overaccumulation for big corporations. Massive capital investment was directed toward the consumption fund, into the building of new housing and towns. The resumption and repair of the productive economy, already at a disadvantage and then damaged by the earthquake, was at first postponed, and later wholly disregarded as a primary objective. The productive arrangements characteristic of regional underdevelopment--for example a crippling infrastructure of antiquated roads and railroads and an absence of low cost credit--were left unaltered in the reconstruction of western Sicily. The emphasis in reconstruction was on recreating an environment suited for residence and the

services associated with it--homes for habitation, stores for shopping, schools for study, and churches for prayer.

The focus on consumption and social reproduction took particular shape in the Belice reconstruction. One can recognize in the design an attempt to isolate individual families, create consumer needs, and foster market dependence. In short, despite years of delays, the domestic environment was repaired and replaced while the productive one was ignored. As a result, I would argue that the Belice residents have been increasingly integrated into large-scale patterns of consumption on the world market and management by the central state. Simultaneously, the extent of economic self-reliance in the area has been diminished, thus exacerbating the population's subordination and dependency vis-à-vis outside sources of money and power.

Despite the massive transformations of consumption patterns and lifestyle, the new wealth is incomplete, temporary, and dependent on resources from the outside. The foundations of this comfort and **benessere** are essentially unsupported. There has been little or no change in the productive sphere of the local economy. The incomes of the majority rest on some form of state subsidy, whether direct assistance in the form of welfare, worker's compensation, and pensions, or indirect assistance attached to the reconstruction effort. This includes state aid for housing, jobs in the building and zoning offices,

employment in the construction industry, and related service work. Many more rely on remittances, mostly from emigrants in northern Europe, to subsidize local consumption. Thus, the new wealth in the Belice Valley is not linked to a strong economic foundation, nor to a new sense of financial security.

Sicilians tell a story to describe their own folly with the sudden substitution of **la miseria** with **benessere**. A poor, slow-witted Sicilian arrives on the shores of America, full of anticipation of promised riches. Walking down the street, he passes a twenty dollar bill fluttering by. "Why don't you pick it up?" asks his friend. "Because," he says with great patience reserved for explaining the obvious, "here in America the streets are littered with twenty dollar bills. Why trouble myself now, when I can pick them up when I need them?"

They sigh after relating this tale, "we are in America here in the Belice, and we're letting the money flutter by, same as this migrant!" Money from the state is falling from above, but by little fault of their own, it is not being used to bring about productive economic transformation.

Despite ambitious goals, the economic activity associated with the reconstruction effort represents what Peter Schneider, Jane Schneider, and Edward Hansen (1972) call "modernization without development." This process refers generally to increased temporary employment

opportunities and a higher standard of living, without the transformation of the basic relationship of dependency on outside markets. In the case of the Belice Valley reconstruction, the state pumped money into the area with construction projects, services, bureaucracy, and entitlements, yet the productive basis of the economy stagnated as agricultural production fell during the construction boom. As the construction of new settlements comes to a close after nearly thirty years, the economic foundation of the area appears precarious to say the least.

Daily life is thus marked by incongruities and contradictions in the new settlements. People can choose from forty-five different brands of shampoo but lack the water with which to wash their hair. They have china dishes from France, but use disposable paper plates to conserve water. Planners have included tennis courts in the new towns but there is no instruction nor maintenance and hot temperatures limit play of the unfamiliar game to early evening. Women enroll in aerobics class to slim down, but drive their car a block away to work or shop so as not to run the social risk of meeting passing men on the sidewalk. People decked out in the latest sweatsuit from the United States and Ferragamo shoes drive their Alfa Romeos, with the American rock singer Prince in the tapedeck, to a crumbling farmhouse to pick up fresh warm ricotta from "their" shepherd who speaks nothing but dialect.

These scattered examples, these contradictions of daily life demonstrate the incomplete and poorly planned transformation of Sicilian settlement. The government has focused on the social reproduction of the earthquake victims--on the physical and social infrastructure of residence and consumption. This emphasis on residence at the expense of economic development and secure productive employment has created an imbalance between lifestyle and the means to support it. And, the most pervasive and glaring contradiction--the large-scale construction of elegant houses in fancy towns elaborately modern with few public services and even fewer employment opportunities--raises questions about the very future of these towns and the economic prospects of the populations inhabiting them.

In this dissertation I try to highlight the linkages between social change and architectural transformation of settlement in the context of reconstruction after the earthquake. My primary goal is to approach the issue of the built environment with an analysis both holistic and dynamic. Rather than look at housing and settlement as fixed spatial containers of people's behavior, I try to analyze the interactive processes, the mutual determinations between social, political, economic change and spatial transformations. This focus on the built environment--oriented by the theories of Castells, Harvey, and Foucault--is integrated with an anthropological

analysis of a historically and culturally specific local case.

Anthropological fieldwork offers a valuable addition to these perspectives on large-scale economic processes. First, ethnographic focus on the local level and everyday behavior highlights the dynamic nature of the relationship between the built environment, its planners, and its inhabitants. Secondly, investigation of people's daily experience helps to provide a more complicated description of the state, repressing the tendency to view it as a monolithic entity with a unified will. Rather, I seek to identify the categories of people involved with planning and chart their intentions and actions, just as I keep in the foreground the interests and composition of the local population. Ethnography can and should make an important contribution to such a perspective by showing how people actually live with and against new patterns of state intervention.

CHAPTER II
THE BELICE VALLEY EARTHQUAKE

In this chapter I describe the earthquake of 1968 in the Belice Valley, its physical impact and the responses of the inhabitants. I then discuss the situation twenty years later in 1988, when I arrived with my husband to engage in a year of fieldwork. A more detailed account of the different patterns of reconstruction in five towns underlines the complexity of the situation. I argue that the earthquake of 1968 served as an important turning point, ushering in changes in the political, economic, and social life in the Belice and considerably exaggerating the impact of other changes already underway.

1. "THE HOUSE NO LONGER HAS ROOTS"

The weather in western Sicily in January 1968 was uncharacteristically cold; after a week of snow a parish priest in Santa Ninfa described his strangely beautiful town: "it had the air of being dressed in new clothes." Documentary film footage from that period shows children frolicking and inexpertly throwing snowballs. During the day of January 14th a light earthquake shook the Belice Valley and many left their houses to pass the afternoon in the safety of the open **piazza**. In the town of Gibellina they discussed the old widow who died from shock and fear during the tremors. Some argued half-seriously that the

earthquake had been orchestrated by the rivalrous capital city, Palermo. There was talk of the apocalypse, scheduled for ten o'clock that evening. After the moment uneventfully ticked by, most returned to their houses to join their families (Barbera 1980: 16-20). Small shocks are common in this seismically active area and few took the first tremors of January 14th seriously enough to evacuate or to enact measures for civil protection.

The **notte dell'inferno** (infernal night) began in the wee hours of January 15th. The major earthquake hit the Belice Valley at two o'clock in the morning, followed by three more devastating aftershocks; at least two of these registered between 6 and 7 on the Richter scale. During the next week and a half the area was hit by forty more lesser shocks (Marino 1968: 59). By June of that year the Belice Valley had been hit by 345 aftershocks, 81 of which registered over 3 Richter (Caldo 1974: 37). The aftershocks continued for years, the most serious in December 1972.

The January 15th tremor is recalled most vividly:

The house became a boat in a hurricane of waves; an invisible force pulled me up, slammed me down, smashed me against one wall, and then against the other wall. I was nothing. I thought: the house no longer has roots. Then a huge crane picked up the house and hurled it to solid ground. The storm was over. A minute of silence, then a sea of voices rose from all over the town. [from Barbera 1980a: 19]¹

1. Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

The men in the **piazza** of Gibellina were mistaken by four and a half hours in their predictions of the apocalypse. The first news story of the earthquake was titled: "Gibellina No Longer Exists" (**Giornale di Sicilia** 15 January 1968). The town was completely destroyed. One hundred eighty-five people died, buried under the rubble. Horrific, bizarre photographs of the relief effort show soldiers and firemen unearthing some of them, lying on their beds, their heads still resting on their pillows (Marino 1968). Nearly 200 people were badly injured, and all townspeople were left homeless. One technician claimed that: "a war could not have been more damaging" (quoted in Marino 1968: 66). In fact, references to warfare and bomb damage were common. Upon first seeing the town of Montevago from the Presidential helicopter, a ministry official said the damage was comparable only to Cassino after World War II. In fact, the town of Montevago lost 90 people and 120 were badly hurt.

Among the rubble of what had been hours before the towns of Gibellina and Montevago, along the only partially passable streets in the towns of Santa Ninfa and Santa Margherita, people wandered about, fearful of houses that had suddenly changed from being the center of domestic comfort to death traps. Many worked alongside firemen and police to clear rubble off buried survivors, following cries muffled by piles of stone and crumbled mortar. Old people walked under blankets, arm in arm, silent (Barbera

1980a: 19-23). Some searched desperately for lost family members and animals. Still others left on foot for nearby towns, hoping to find them less damaged, hoping to find refuge there with relatives and friends (Farinella 1968: 33-34). Few could sleep during those first days and nights; the mud was deep, the temperatures and memories chilling, and promised mattresses and tents long delayed. Some stayed awake purposely to watch the surviving animals for signs of agitation, a signal of further tremors (Barbera 1980a: 19-23).

The earthquake epicenter ran along the principle fault line spanning the only two rivers of southwestern Sicily, the Fiume Freddo and the Fiume Belice (see Figure 1). The earthquake affected a population of 1.3 million in 80 towns in the three western Sicilian provinces of Agrigento, Trapani, and Palermo. Major devastation was confined to 14 towns in an area of 1100 square kilometers with a population of 97,000. (Figures vary according to the particular account and the dates of data collection. I combine information from local newspapers, Caldo [1974], and Marino [1968], for most figures regarding the earthquake.) Between 350 and 500 died in the earthquake, between 600 and 1000 were badly injured, between 80,000 and 100,000 were left homeless. At least 50,000 more were to be relocated from houses damaged beyond repair. The houses to be repaired and reinforced with anti-seismic construction numbered 20,000 (Caldo 1974: 65). Over 90% of the

agriculture, the major source of employment in the area, was destroyed or badly damaged (Marino 1968: 68).

Three levels of government were involved with the assessment of the earthquake damage: the technical offices of each town or **comune**, the civil engineering offices of the three provinces, and the superintendency of public works for the region of Sicily, all contributed to the surveys of physical damage.² In the 14 towns hit hardest by the earthquake, 32% of the building patrimony was totally ruined (11,500 of 36,819 buildings), 24% was gravely damaged and deemed uninhabitable (9100 of 36,819 buildings), and 44% of the buildings suffered lesions in the walls, ceilings, and floors (Caldo 1974: 54). Original cost estimates of damage were set between 200 and 300 billion lire (Marino 1968: 51).

The earthquake damage extended beyond the 14 Belice towns; at least 12 additional towns in the three provinces suffered approximately 10% damage. These towns covered an area of 2000 square kilometers with a population of 220,000 people (Caldo 1974: 54).³ But again, the figures vary

2. The unclear division of duties associated with damage assessment led to confusion. Contributing to the general disorder were the major discrepancies between the damage assessments of private residential architecture (provided by the town technical offices) and the assessments of damage to public and religious architecture (provided by the provincial civil engineering offices). The various government offices did little to standardize these criteria. (*L'Ora* 2-3 August 1969).

3. Panic from the earthquake spread far beyond the Belice Valley area. On the southwest coast, 60 houses were lesioned in Marsala. In the distant city of Palermo, many fled to open areas carrying blankets and their most

wildly regarding the number of towns affected. According to the government agency overseeing the Belice reconstruction, 115 towns were surveyed and requested financing, while only 15 towns were initially included as legally earthquaked, with six other towns added to the list mandated by the reconstruction law a few years later. According to engineers employed by the Ispettorato offices, the affected towns were as follows: in the Province of Palermo: Camporeale, Contessa, Monreale (Grisi), and Roccamena. In Agrigento: Menfi, Montevago, Sambuca, and Santa Margherita. In Trapani: Gibellina, Partanna, Poggioreale, Salaparuta, Santa Ninfa, Salemi, Vita and Calatafimi. The additional six towns were all in the Province of Palermo: Bisacquino, Chiusa Sclafani, Campofiorito, Corleone, and Giuliana (see also Law no. 241, article 11).

The Regional Law of 20 July 1968 included 92 towns among the earthquaked. Estimates have been exaggerated by the towns themselves, with 113 **comuni** declaring themselves hit by the earthquake, that is, nearly a third of Sicily's

valuable possessions. Long lines formed at gas stations throughout the city during that first long night as fear of shortages mounted. Tent camps were set up in three different Palermo neighborhoods for those too frightened to re-enter their homes (Marino 1968: 5, 108). Doctors were busy treating nosebleeds of children who ran too quickly down stairs to escape their buildings. All this reaction in a city at least 60 kilometers from the epicenter in which hardly a building was cracked. Or, seen in another way, perhaps because the city was hit only slightly this kind of effective response--the provision of medical care no matter how trivial, emergency housing, distribution of supplies--could occur efficiently.

(380) towns (De Bonis 1979: 117)! Clearly some of these claims were magnified by town officials in order to qualify their communities for the gravy train of state aid they assumed would follow the disaster.

Journalists and scholars agree on a core of 14 Belice towns hit most severely by the earthquake, a reckoning I adopt here. Gibellina and Montevago suffered most in terms of death, injury, and physical damage. Major devastation also occurred in Salaparuta, Poggioreale, Santa Ninfa, and Santa Margherita di Belice. Other communities on the immediate periphery of the epicenter are Partanna, Salemi, Contessa Entellina, Vita, Sambuca di Sicilia, Menfi, Camporeale, and Calatafimi. Caldo provides figures regarding the percentage of physical damage in these towns from the surveys provided by provincial civil engineering offices (Caldo 1974: 55). Combining the categories of totally destroyed, gravely damaged, and lesioned buildings, the indexical figures of physical destruction are as follows:

| | | | |
|-------------|------|------------------|-----|
| Gibellina | 100% | Santa Margherita | 58% |
| Montevago | 100% | Menfi | 45% |
| Salaparuta | 100% | Contessa | 39% |
| Poggioreale | 100% | Camporeale | 28% |
| Santa Ninfa | 79% | Vita | 25% |
| Partanna | 65% | Calatafimi | 23% |
| Salemi | 64% | Sambuca | 13% |

[Caldo 1974: 55]

The general state of architecture and the particularities of urban form in these poor rural towns exacerbated the physical destruction wrought by the earthquake. The pre-earthquake settlement patterns of the Belize agrotowns are of two basic types, differing in historical origins and general morphology. Towns built in the medieval period under the influence of Arab and Norman domination were sited along mountain ridges; these perches served defensive purposes and provided easy access to water resources. In the late 16th and 17th centuries, latifundist agriculture spread with the expansion of feudalism; towns were built in valleys and effectively centralized the peasant labor force employed on the extensive agricultural holdings (Valussi 1968; Blok 1974). In both types of settlement, buildings were contiguous, one next to the other, lining the thoroughfares and the sidestreets and alleyways. Houses constructed in rows shared sidewalls while their facades abutted the street in a solid mass. This aspect of settlement design is referred to as a **schiera**, a term implying a military formation or line-up.

The damage from the earthquake was exceptional when it hit towns built of a **schiera** housing. The tremors had a domino effect; as one building crumbled into the narrow street, those adjoining it were pulled down too. The great majority of houses were built of inexpensive local limestone and stone-rubble masonry which provided little or

no resistance to the tremors. In addition to the vulnerable settlement design and weak building materials, local conformity to outdated zoning regulations was far from rigorous. Thus, despite some efforts made in the past to ensure the stability of buildings, the earthquake had more devastating effects than might have been anticipated.

Long delays in providing emergency relief intensified the impact of the earthquake. The relief effort was obstructed first by local weather conditions; the worst shocks occurred at night, during a **scirocco** (the particularly strong winds from Africa) in an uncommonly cold and snowy winter. Roads leading to the area and linking the towns internally amounted to little more than worn-out agricultural routes, bumpy and rough-going due to potholes and erosion. In fact, while plans to replace them with the highway system--the **autostrada**--had been formulated prior to the earthquake, nothing had yet been built. The communications network was similarly undeveloped; the few existing phone and telegraph links were disabled by the earthquake. Reporters for the major Sicilian daily newspaper, the **Giornale di Sicilia**, only learned of the earthquake because one of its delivery-truck drivers in the area found the road ruptured and impassable; he had to walk miles to the nearest town, Gibellina, to apprehend the impact of the disaster (**Giornale di Sicilia** 15 January 1988). Finally, the lack of heavy machinery and

emergency personnel in the western Sicilian interior further impeded rapid disaster relief.

Although national political leaders rushed down to the earthquake zone in helicopters, full of declarations and promises, emergency relief supplies were to arrive only three, four, or five days after the earthquake. Heavy equipment and additional personnel were needed to remove rubble and demolish precarious buildings, to unearth the dead and bury them in graves. Tents, food, clean water, and medical supplies were needed immediately to treat the victims and protect them from sickness and exposure. Emergency relief teams were composed of firemen, local and national police forces, and Red Cross workers. Despite these teams, personnel was badly needed to organize and distribute supplies. The delays were exasperating and dangerous; for instance, not having masks, relief workers had to tie rags and handkerchiefs around their faces for protection from contagion while salvaging and burying the dead (Marino 1968: 81).

Those in the towns of the epicenter had very few options after the earthquake. They were reduced to camping in the outskirts of their damaged communities. In Poggioreale and Gibellina the survivors camped on high ground, up near the cemetery (Marino 1968: 75). From this high point they watched the relief teams approach with wheelbarrows heavy with bodies. When the relief workers turned their wheelbarrows right, towards the ambulances and

the camp, a cheer would break out. When instead they turned left, towards the entrance of the cemetery, cries of anguish and mourning rose to punctuate the otherwise quiet air of the camp (**Giornale di Sicilia** 15 January 1968).

The helicopters from Rome hovering over the Belice Valley those first days raised the hopes of the stricken population. Aldo Moro, then President of the Council of Ministers (Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri), Italy's equivalent of a Prime Minister, was first to arrive on January 16th. When asked about providing emergency relief supplies, he unknowingly echoed Mussolini's 1925 promises to the population of Messina, on Sicily's eastern coast, stuck in barracks from an earthquake in 1908 (Mack Smith 1982: 93). He gave assurances that the government "would not sleep" until care had been provided for the earthquake victims. The next day the President of the Republic, Guiseppe Saragat, arrived by helicopter with further guarantees. These dignitaries were followed by many other lower level state officials throughout those first days following the earthquake, all concerned, all with promises of relief supplies. The population continued to clamor for emergency care. One of the disappointed survivors bitterly remarked that after all the official visits, handshakes, and publicity, "still no milk, no blankets, and no medicine...If instead of an earthquake there had been a rebellion in the Belice Valley, it would take only one hour

to bring everything, even tanks, down here" (Lu Lampuso in Barbera 1980a: 21-22).

Eventually, some assistance did arrive to the Belice. Nearly a week after the earthquake, the victims received supplies donated by the government, private businesses, philanthropic organizations, national and international citizen's groups, church orders, the Red Cross, and other worldwide disaster-relief agencies. Tent camps were set up by the military during that first week after the earthquake. Accounts of the early days in tents describe nightmarish scenes: cold and dejected people standing in long lines, feet sunk deep into the mud, holding bowls to be filled with food at the camp kitchen. Each camp was run by an army colonel and the inhabitants grew to resent the military order. In some of the tent camps citizens established committees and reconstituted community governments to replace the military command structure (Barbera 1980a: 28-33).

There were more alternatives for those with damaged buildings outside the epicentral towns. People camped in railroad cars (often two families to a car), stayed with relatives whose housing was still secure, or left the built-up area of the town altogether. In Salemi and Calatafimi, for example, many of those forced to evacuate went to the countryside to seek refuge in agricultural buildings. An informant from Calatafimi described her flight:

We rushed to the car! My husband, the four children, my parents and I, bundled into the car to leave the town as quickly as we were able; we packed nothing. We were scared of our houses and wanted to get away from them. The roads were jammed with people, animals, cars and debris. We reached my father's **baglio** (a complex of agricultural buildings) to find it crumbled to dust. He had changed crops the year before, replaced wheat with the American tomatoes which stay fresh all winter long when hung from the rafters. Nothing was left of our baglio except those cursed tomatoes dangling from a single rafter, ready to fall. Later on the birds ate them.

This family went on to find shelter in the **baglio** of cousins. The extended family of 30 or 40 people remained in the countryside for the next few months, frequently returning to town to get supplies from their damaged houses.

While the tent camps were still inhabited long after the earthquake (10,000 still lived in tents four months later according to **L'Ora** 4 April 1968), a more permanent type of temporary housing was being built within the month in some towns. An odd assortment of light-weight structures was erected atop vast slabs of cement; these barrackstowns replaced the tent cities during that first year. Most were financed by the national and regional governments, but non-governmental groups such as church agencies and cities outside the earthquake zone also provided barracks for social centers, health clinics, and schools (**Gazzetta del Sud** 14 January 1988). The actual building of the barracks was more often than not done by

northern companies, who were the most prompt with bids for rapid construction (**Giornale di Sicilia** 14 January 1969).

The 80,000-100,000 homeless viewed the move from tents to barracks with much skepticism. While the government argued that the more durable metal barracks would allow for the rational, unhurried urban planning of the area, many earthquake victims worried that the barracks would serve as a permanent alternative to real housing as they had for well over half a century in Messina (Marino 1968: 136). At least 26 barrackstowns were built in the 14 earthquake towns of the Belice Valley, covering a total area of 360 hectares, or nearly 900 acres (Caldo 1974: 60-61). While most barrackstowns housed between 500 and 1000 residents, the two which served in the epicentral area were enormous: one for 4000 people between Salaparuta and Poggioreale, and one for 5000 people seven kilometers from Gibellina. In these two cases, the old towns were completely emptied out but for those scavenging the wreckage (see Figure 4).

According to Caldo, government estimates of necessary emergency housing were modest and inadequate; many more than expected fled to barracks housing, particularly following major aftershocks. For example, the government provided and planned emergency housing for 55% of the Santa Margherita population, but nearly 95% of the town moved into the barracks fearing future earthquakes (Caldo 1974: 60). Towns badly damaged but not totally destroyed--such as Salemi, Partanna, and Menfi--built multiple, smaller

barrackstowns dispersed in various peripheral areas. In these towns the damaged historic centers retained a greater significance in daily life (Caldo 1974: 61). People tried to stay in repairable houses while bars, **piazze**, and offices continued to serve as central social places.

Barracks housing was of three types. The Canadian and American governments donated tin, semi-cylindrical, quansit huts for which the Italian government paid the symbolic price of one dollar apiece. Each of these could house two families. The rest of the barracks were provided by Italians. The second type of barrack, also made of tin, was rectangular and housed four families. The third type, which eventually came to dominate the barrackstowns, was made of wood and tin; it was square and housed one or two families. Barracks space was assigned with 25-35 square meters for each family of up to four members; larger families received twice that area (Caldo 1974: 60).

Life inside the barracks was at best an uncomfortable security. The buildings were rickety and unsound; rain leaked through roofs, which were weighted down against strong winds with chunks of limestone, dangling off the eaves from ropes and wires. The barracks were much too small, and the dark interiors were overwhelmingly crowded with people, furnishings, and other belongings salvaged from damaged houses. Furniture was especially awkward in the round-walled barracks. Curtains divided daytime living space from sleeping areas. But, the physical hardship was

no worse than the emotional and social hardship associated with the lack of privacy. As one informant said in retrospect: "we all lived in common; everyone knew what the others did, all day long, all night long." Another complained that she could not feed her children what she wanted, when she wanted: "we all ate the same things all at the same time; if my children cried for food any other time, there was nothing I could do." This helplessness in responding to her children's hunger epitomized an unacceptable loss of self-control for this mother.

2. TWENTY YEARS LATER

My husband and I arrived in the Belice Valley during the cold wet winter of 1988, twenty years after the earthquake. Although I had read of the 14 most damaged towns and had visited some of them years earlier, I thought it important to tour the earthquake zone before choosing a fieldwork site. This provided a rough idea of the similarities and differences between the towns and their patterns of reconstruction. In this initial investigation, I identified three types of towns: those completely destroyed, those badly damaged, and those only partially damaged. While in some communities I knew friends (or friends of friends) who were able to guide me through the towns and explain the history of reconstruction, in others my first visit was superficial and my evaluations impressionistic. I presented the research agenda simply

and without theoretical claims to friends, acquaintances, and officials in the various towns: I was interested in comparing old and new housing, with a special focus on local reactions to the reconstructed towns and houses.⁴ While looking for a town in which to settle, some tried to actively court us with offers of apartments and data sources for research, while others discouraged us from studying in their towns. Thus, for the first two weeks we postponed forming any decision regarding an eventual fieldsite. Instead we visited different Belice towns, discussed the drawbacks and benefits of each as well as the potential contacts in them, and tried to evaluate housing opportunities as they influenced our own living situation.

GIBELLINA

Gibellina is the most famous town in the Belice. The old town, Gibellina Vecchia, was entirely destroyed by the earthquake (see Figure 5). While it has been completely

4. I had learned from my mistakes. In early discussion with a local planner, I had once explained my central hypothesis regarding the role of the state--namely that the local population might object to the total control over the design and construction of residential and public space by the state. An impartial Sicilian friend who accompanied me on this interview later chastized me for discussing theoretical claims with my informants. Knowing more about the anthropological method than I at that point, he wisely advised me to simplify the presentation of my research topic: let my informants tell me what they thought of the state's role and people's reactions. He also noted that with my declaration I had put the planner, himself an employee of the state, on the defensive, ensuring that he would withhold all relevant information, or worse, lie to me.

abandoned for the new town, there are road signs indicating the directions to **I Ruderi di Gibellina**, the Ruins of Gibellina. In contrast to the other abandoned earthquake towns which have been bulldozed (e.g., Salaparuta) or left to slowly deteriorate (e.g., Poggioreale), Gibellina Vecchia has become something of a tourist attraction. Its appeal is not to ghoulish voyeurs drawn to catastrophe, but to an educated population interested in contemporary art and theater. The municipal administration has attempted to make Gibellina into one of the "100 Little Big Towns" of Italy, and outsiders are encouraged to visit and participate in various cultural activities.

Amid the rubble, an outdoor theatre has been built to present avant-garde interpretations of ancient Greek plays to summer visitors. In another part of the abandoned old town, an entire hillside has been cleared of rubble for the construction of a huge cement sculpture by Alberto Burri, an Italian artist famous for his abstract works composed of mundane materials. One can stroll through the five-foot-high slabs of stark white cement on paths which represent the ghosts of the crumbled streets (La Monica 1981: 85). Some Belice residents, who have not read the artist's explanations of the work, see the paths as outlining the cracks in the earth opened up by the earthquake, while others focus on the slabs themselves as the burial stones marking Gibellina's dead. Gibellina Vecchia is an eerie memorial, empty but for the stray tourist with esoteric

tastes and the crowds attending experimental theatrical productions on occasional summer evenings.

Leaving Gibellina Vecchia one passes a kilometer-long stretch of wreckage--the remains not of the old town, but of the abandoned barrackstown (see Figure 6). The cement foundations are still visible, terraced up the hillside. Broken glass and rusted car frames are strewn about, grass grows up through the cracks in the grey cement. At the edge of the hillside four or five forlorn barracks remain. No one was about, just rags hanging out to dry and chickens pecking around the rusty cars. We later learned that these were the homes of desperately poor squatters, itinerant immigrant workers, or temporary shelters for those who farm the surrounding countryside.

The new town of Gibellina seemed barely more animated than the **ruderi** on a winter afternoon. This completely rebuilt town sits on flat land some 16 kilometers away from its former hilly location (see Figure 7). Many complain that the new town site is too far from the old town, making visiting the old cemetery or commuting to one's farmland difficult and expensive. (Gasoline prices are controlled by the government and were three or four times higher than those in the U.S. in 1988. For instance, it cost us \$10.00 to drive 60 miles in a sedan.) Some say the new town site was chosen because a powerful mafia family wanted to sell that particular piece of property. Others say the site was chosen because of its proximity to the nearly defunct

railroad line and new **autostrada** or superhighway, which connects the Gibellina region to Palermo. And, others say the site was chosen for its geological soundness and anti-seismic qualities. While the arguments over site choice are typical of the new Belice settlements, Gibellina was extraordinary in its emphasis on contemporary art as an integral part of the reconstruction strategy. The landscape of Gibellina, a modernist town surrounded by vacant countryside, is everywhere punctuated by the huge, playful sculptures, produced by many of Italy's best-known contemporary artists.⁵

An enormous five-pointed star spans the four-lane highway that connects the small town of approximately 5000 to the **autostrada**. It provides theatre to the everyday. Those entering drive through one point of the star, those leaving drive through another. Pietro Consagra designed the 26 meter (85 feet) high polished steel structure to serve as "the city gate." He said that he and the other artists contributing to the new Gibellina worked "to go beyond the merely practical solutions, to provide an extraneous object to function in response to compelling needs" (Consagra in La Monica 1981: 53).

We were immediately struck by the newness of the town, and its emptiness. There were no people milling about in

5. There are about a dozen works throughout the town. Participating artists include Pietro Consagra, Alberto Burri, Turi Simeti, Ignazio Moncada, Emilio Isgro, Paolo Schiavocampo, Elio Marchegiani, Igino Legnaghi. Most of the artists provided the works for the cost of materials.

its streets and **piazze**. The houses, modernist box-like structures of concrete, are placed back from the streets. Thus, domestic life does not spill out into public areas as is characteristic in old Sicilian towns, but is contained on each lot, behind each fence, inside of each house.

Driving around the town on the wide-open, boulevard-like streets, it was easy to identify the general types of housing in new Gibellina. There are blocks of public housing, designed and built by the state, located on the periphery. Here row houses--single family dwellings of the cheapest cement construction--are distinguished from other housing types by their small size and run-down condition. Newer multi-storied apartment blocks, of better materials and more appealing design, have been built under state auspices as cooperative housing. In other areas of town the majority of houses are private, detached, single family residences, uniformly distanced from each other and the street.

The ubiquitous monumental artwork is the stuff of high drama: huge and varied sculptures of wood, cement, metal, and stone sprawl across vast piazze, break up narrow pedestrian walkways, accent the facades of public buildings, and reach out across the fields on the outskirts of town. Despite the enormous effort to integrate art into public space, at the time of our visit there was a lonely, disconnected feeling between the artwork, the architecture, and the community. No one stood drinking coffee next to

Ignazio Moncada's wonderful ceramic mural portraying arches and doorways in the form of an "abstract archaeology" (La Monica 1981). Nor did passing pedestrians stop to contemplate the rounded shapes of human proportions designed by Paolo Schiavocampo to contrast with the hard, angular architecture of the housing.

While the streets and **piazze** were quiet, we found a great bustle in the museum-theatre complex. Students rehearsed an upcoming play, local men chatted in the gallery where a new exhibit had just been installed, and a visiting artist-in-residence was banging away on a piece of metal in his studio. If economic activity and the social life of the street were absent, the local government's promotion of the arts and the community's involvement in them were apparent in the museum building.

Gibellina's public buildings--the town hall, the church and the museum--are centrally located and all are monumental showpieces of contemporary architecture. The church, although unfinished, brought to our minds a physics experiment; a huge ball of cement, the inside of which would serve as the altar and pulpit, is suspended off the side of a rectangular, windowless box, the body of the church (see Figure 8). Although still under construction in 1988, the interior struck the visitor as fascinating and spiritually moving in its massive and unexpected design. But if the public buildings are concentrated, there is no centralized commercial district. A few bars are located

near these important locations but businesses and shops are dispersed unevenly throughout the residential areas. Because they are distinguished by neither size nor architecture, it is difficult to locate the grocery store or the notary public's office within the rows of houses. From this arrangement, it appears that art and public administration were given priority over the less lofty endeavors of housing, business and commerce in the reconstruction.

The general impression we had of Gibellina that afternoon was of a theatrical set prior to curtain time: an empty town ornamented with fine artistic works, waiting to be filled with the drama of human life. There was the postmodern house-cum-store of the pharmacist, whose entryway was demarcated by highly-stylized classical columns, very consciously crumbled and uneven. There was a bar and video gameroom made of raw, exposed, and rusted steel in the shape of a pretzel--a statement about rust and fatigue with an industrialism that never actually occurred in western Sicily. The open-air concert hall, built of materials salvaged from a noble family's palace or **palazzo**, represents one of the more effective attempts to blend restoration ideals with new construction techniques and materials, in a composition simultaneously modern and ancient. From earthquake rubble to post-modernist rubble, Gibellina had travelled rapidly through architectural history in the past twenty years.

As we left the town at dusk three boys rushed up to us from nowhere, wound up like American ballplayers, then hurled stones at our car. As nothing like this had ever happened to us before or since in Sicily, we still wonder what motivated them. Did our German license plates inspire such aggression? Had these boys tired of tourists gawking at the art? Or was it a more elusive resentment towards the local administration, which had oriented the reconstruction of their town to appeal to a cultured outsider elite? Perhaps these boys (and by extension, their parents) would have preferred to live in the vicinity of their buried grandparents and romp in playgrounds rather than live among art work appreciated by German tourists.

SANTA MARGHERITA DI BELICE

I had visited the badly damaged town of Santa Margherita five years earlier, curious to see the remains of the summer palace featured in Giuseppe Lampedusa's novel, **The Leopard** (see Figure 9). Rubble of the old town surrounded the fragments of the Lampedusa villa: an exposed interior wall of the family chapel with the stucco work still evident after 20 years of exposure, the ornate exterior stairways leading up to what was once the grand entrance of the palace, the moss-covered gates of the Monkey Garden enclosing it from the abandoned streets of the empty town. There was no one around save a bent old

man pushing a wheelbarrow piled high with antique floor tiles salvaged from the **palazzo**.

The population of Santa Margherita lived in the adjoining barrackstown. The new town site was roughly laid out further beyond the barrackstown, but I saw very little indication of reconstruction in 1983; some roads were started, a "popular" or state subsidized housing project built, a few concrete skeletons of house frames. The real life of the community took place in the barrackstown. Neighborhood identities and affiliations were formed by barracks inhabitants. The business of municipal offices and stores was conducted inside tin huts, as were the affairs of schools, churches, and doctors.

Because little had progressed on reconstruction during the first 15 years after the earthquake, I was struck by the dramatic changes that had occurred in the five years between my visits. When I returned in 1988, the contours of the new town were clearly evident, and there was a flurry of building activity (see Figure 10). While 60% of the population still lived in barracks (it was now twenty years since the disaster!), all who were not yet living in the new housing were in some stage of planning or construction. The transformation was imminent; people who were building private houses with state funding were anticipating their move especially eagerly.

For instance, my contact and guide through the town was still living in a barrack with his wife and two adult

children. After 20 years, they knew how to get around in that constricted area. My husband and I, on the other hand, felt too big and awkward to move easily within the barrack. We crowded into the front room--a **salotto** used as both living room and dining room--to eat a delicious four course meal cooked on a hot plate in the alleyway "kitchen" of two square meters. (Foodstuffs were stored in boxes and plastic sacks in an outside area behind the barrack.) The **salotto** was crammed with furniture: a television console, an enormous floor-to-ceiling hutch filled with knick-knacks, mementoes and china, two couches, some heavy easy chairs, and a dining set of matching table and chairs wedged somehow in between them all. To get to the bathroom it was necessary to pass through the bedroom (just big enough for a double bed and a bureau, which was piled high with suitcases) and a tiny study-cum-storage room where one of the grown children slept. The bathroom had no running water; after rinsing my hands in the bowl of water balanced on the sink, I wondered nervously if I could use it to flush.

Life in the barrack was tight and uncomfortable. My hostess avoided discussion of this 20 year aberration in her family's residential history. All attention was directed towards the four-story **palazzo** they were having built in the new town. It was nearly finished and they were anxious to show it to us.

It turned out to be an impressively large apartment house in the center of town. Four of the five apartments were to be divided among family members: the parents, each child and future spouse, and a sister-in-law and her family. The smaller attic apartment would be rented out, as would the ground floor commercial space. A tenant had already been secured. The enormous basement was already equipped for large family gatherings associated with festivals, baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Each apartment in the new building had six or seven spacious rooms, accessed through arched doorways accented with doorjams of precious wood. The floors were tiled with ceramic and marble, the ceilings were stuccoed by highly skilled craftsmen. The two bathrooms in each apartment had gold-plated fixtures, a bath, shower and vanity table. "American style" cabinets and modern appliances of matching design appointed the new kitchens. The common laundry room was on the rooftop terrace. The family members were all excited, anticipating the dramatic transformation of their lifestyle. They were leaving the rickety, overcrowded barrack with plywood floors and a metal roof secured with dangling blocks of stone to enter the palatial luxury of a new, very modern apartment building.

SANTA NINFA

We were encouraged by friends in Palermo to visit Santa Ninfa, hailed as one of the more successful

reconstruction projects. Upon arrival, it was indeed evident that the reconstruction of Santa Ninfa was impressively executed. While 50 families still waited in barracks for public housing in 1988, this badly damaged earthquake town of about 5500 had been almost completely rebuilt, with a new section adjacent to the repaired and restored old section (see Figures 11 and 12). In contrast to problems experienced in the other earthquaked towns, delays in Santa Ninfa were few and the spatial continuity between the old town and the new was established and maintained.

In Santa Ninfa there is a definite collective consciousness regarding earthquake reconstruction and subsequent changes in urban structure and social life. Eschewing the strategy of public art and tourism adopted by the Gibellina administration, the town government has focused more on economic development, encouraging local, small scale businesses and commerce. Ideologically it has advocated the development of town pride and local self promotion. The town government was dominated by a strong center-left coalition during the reconstruction. Many have noted a correlation between leftist municipal governments and rapid approval and implementation of reconstruction plans (L'Ora 2-3 April 1969, 12 July 1969).

The planning and design of the new section of Santa Ninfa followed an English suburban model with wide streets, rounded cul-de-sacs, and many detached single family

houses. By contrast, in the plan of the repaired old section as much of the original urban structure as possible has been retained. Streets were rebuilt according to the earlier outlines, the town hall and central **piazza** were constructed on their original sites, with the reconstructed **piazza** built around the three miraculously-saved palm trees of the old **piazza**. Even some house plots were reassigned to families in their previous locations.

According to our guides, the local administration had two objectives in mind when assigning apartments and house lots. Although they wanted to maintain the original placement of many families, they also wanted to institute a more equitable property distribution than had been the case in pre-earthquake Santa Ninfa. Thus, those who had very little or no land in the town prior to the earthquake were assigned to public housing or granted a state-financed contribution (**contributo**) to build on a lot provided in the new section. Those who had more town land prior to the earthquake were granted a subsidy to rebuild on a large lot in the new section or on a lot smaller than their original piece in the old section. Most who could did stay to rebuild in the old section, despite the smaller lot size. As a result, property was more equitably distributed in real terms, but a new pattern of residential segregation was created. There were new geographical concentrations of the richer and older population on small lots in the prestigious old section, while the poorer and younger

population tended to live on larger lots in the often disparaged new section. Our guides, two local teachers, lived in a new house built in the countryside far from the town, a locational choice which was originally viewed as daring, even irresponsible, but which has recently become accepted as more and more families follow their lead.

Additional unexpected consequences have emerged in Santa Ninfa--most notably a generational split in evaluations of the town's reconstruction. For example, in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the earthquake, teachers and students at the Santa Ninfa school made a video about the disaster and reconstruction of the town. This well-made documentary features before-and-after photographs and film footage as well as interviews with relief workers, religious and political figures, and inhabitants. People discuss the new Santa Ninfa still emerging, a Santa Ninfa subject to contest and negotiation between young and old. Young people extoll the new sports complex, the social club affiliated with the former Communist Party (PCI),⁶ and the commercial boulevard running through the center of the new section. Older inhabitants complain of the distance between the new and old sections, of their inability to reach the public buildings centralized in the familiar old section without use of an automobile, and of the "coldness" of the new

6. The P.C.I. is currently the Democratic Party of the Left.

architecture. One old lady cries in frustration: she can see her daughter's house across the new section of the town, yet she cannot reach it on the new and unfamiliar streets. In short, the film can be understood as a public attempt to express opinions, air debate, and acknowledge the enormous impact the earthquake and its aftermath. As such, it typifies the open nature of the reconstruction process in Santa Ninfa, at once conflictual and effective.

SALEMI

Salemi is a relatively large town of about 14,000 residents on the northwestern edge of the Belice zone. Three distinct zones of settlement are evident in Salemi: the gracious old center now being restored, the adjacent peripheral neighborhoods of the old town abandoned after the earthquake as stipulated by a post-earthquake regional law, and the new section, nearly completed (see Figure 13). The reconstruction of this partially damaged town has been approached from two directions: that of creating a new town **tabula rasa** for the 50% in need of housing, and that of restoring the beautiful private residences of the old center. Initially a new section was built according to modernist design precepts and northern European planning principles for suburban development. This new section is several kilometers distant from the hilltop old town of Roman origins, from which one can look down on the neat rows of two- and three-story reinforced concrete housing

tracts in a valley below. Although a good number of people live there, the new area is considered isolated and remote. Our guides and their friends complained that it was too far from town and too cold in architectural design. Living in the new section was clearly one of the less favored residential options for those with whom we spoke in Salemi.

Most inhabitants try to relocate in the old section. Still the center of commercial and public life, it is considered the most desirable address. Following the construction of the new zone, an effort was undertaken by private citizens and the public administration to repair and restore the medieval section of the old town.

Salemi has always played a dominant role in the history of western Sicily. As "Sicana," it was one of the five free Greek cities in Sicily. During the medieval period, the Arabs renamed the town Salemi, and its morphology and structure were totally reorganized as it emerged as the major stopover on the active trade route between the northern and the southern coasts of the island. When the Spanish ruled Sicily from Aragon, important noble lineages--e.g., the Ventimiglia, the Alagona, and the Moncada--possessed large feudal landholdings within Salemi's vast territory (181.82 square kilometers).

The old center of Salemi is picturesque. Sweeping vistas of rich agricultural fields are framed by tall, narrow, 14th century buildings and Baroque balcony grills and courtyard gates. The courtyards (*cortili*), decorated

with potted plants and meticulously clean, serve as semi-public entryways into houses or clusters of houses. The heavily polished wooden doors, often crowned with a family crest, reflect the town's position as an agricultural and commercial center in the trans-Mediterranean trade networks of past centuries. The streets are narrow and cobbled with large flagstones, polished and slippery from years of wear. They are winding and bend in on themselves; the local people refer to the town as a snail because of these circular streets. The restoration effort of the old town is restricted to the central area, the place of elite residence, commerce, and public administration.

On the periphery of the town, spread over the slopes below the central district, there are two all but depopulated neighborhoods, once the residential zones of primarily poor, agricultural day laborers. Although some houses have been reduced to rubble by the earthquake and abandonment, others stand intact and empty, testimony of pre-earthquake housing conditions of land poor peasants. The buildings are small with cramped dark interiors, adjacent to stalls, work and storage spaces. There are fewer internal courtyards here, no stone-carved family crests nor ornate stucco facades. While many inhabitants of this neighborhood have been relocated by the local administration into the new section of town, there have yet to be any decisions made regarding future plans for this area.

Besides vacating the population from this poor neighborhood, there has been only one major intervention here since the earthquake. An open-air theatre in high post-modernist style was constructed with state and regional financing in the early 1980s. Purposely crumbled classical columns emerge without regularity from cement backdrops, the walkways of concrete lead off in different directions. This theatrical space gets its drama from location; framed by the surrounding buildings abandoned by the poor, one gets a feeling of surreal discomfort. The noise and activity of a quarter once full of children playing, women cooking, and men working with produce and animals remain present only as ghostly images in the shadows of the vast concrete space. We were told that while this theatre cost 600 million lire to build, it had not yet been used. Understandably, there was angry debate developing over a proposal for a second open-air theatre in another area of Salemi's old town. Our guides shrugged their shoulders as if in resignation for just one more example of the massive amount of money wasted on poorly planned reconstruction projects in the Belice Valley.

These informants were a professional couple who lived far from town on a back country road. On our way back to their house for lunch, we went through a fourth section of Salemi: the **zona per villeggiatura**, or area of country houses. The houses in this area are detached, single family villas (from which derives the word **villeggiatura**,

now referring to holidays or vacation), distanced from the road with iron gates and long pebbled driveways. While a relatively new phenomena in most Belice towns, the area of **villeggiatura** in Salemi's countryside has been a well-established summer resort for local nobility as far back as the last century. A few of the houses attest to this history of wealth and patrician leisure. To these three-story houses built around courtyards and modelled after Florentine villas, the landowner would come with his family to pass the summer months and oversee the management of the family's vineyards or latifundia estates.

Since the earthquake there has been an explosive development of this countryside area into a sprawling, almost suburban neighborhood. Many who had property at the time of the earthquake used state subsidies to rebuild their houses not in the new or old sections of the town, but in this area of **villeggiatura**. Following the earlier pattern of lot arrangement, with the building placed at the back of the lot and pillars and gates marking its front entry, the new houses are radically different in design and style from their noble precedents. Driving through this area, our attention was riveted: it was as though within five kilometers we had travelled through time and space from the medieval Europe of Salemi's center to the Los Angeles suburbs of postwar consumer society. Some of the houses were of ranch design, others low, boxy, and wooden, recalling Frank Lloyd Wright constructions. All were only

partially visible behind the cement pillars and manicured lawns. (We wondered if there were sprinkler systems in this land of perpetual water shortage.)

While most people who own homes in Salemi's **villeggiatura** area use them exclusively in the summer, a few have chosen to settle there permanently, commuting daily the ten minutes by car to go to work, shops, schools, or to visit with friends and family. Our guides were among the first to pursue this residential option during the winter months. Like our informants in Santa Ninfa, they were issued dire warnings of the loneliness and isolation of country living, and were even accused of acting irresponsibly as parents, drawing their children away from the active life of the town.

Each town discussed above--Gibellina, Santa Margherita di Belice, Santa Ninfa, and Salemi--exemplifies specific features common to the earthquake reconstruction process in the Belice Valley. Changing trends in settlement pattern were evident with major distinctions emerging between the people and the spaces of the new towns, the old repaired towns, and the newly suburbanized countryside. In all cases, the site location of the new town had been problematic, the domestic environment transformed. The architecture of the new settlements was predominantly modernist in style, influenced more by international models than by indigenous forms. As such, it was new and

unfamiliar to the local population. And, people felt both pleased and discontented with different aspects of their new residential arrangements.

3. CALATAFIMI: THE FIELDSITE

I turn now to the site of my fieldwork, Calatafimi. This town illustrates many of the common features of earthquake reconstruction discussed above. This as well as other logistical conditions, such as the availability of housing and my friendship with the mayor's relatives, made this town a good place to settle. Although typical in many ways of the other Belice towns, Calatafimi was exceptional for its especially long delays in reconstruction. The new area was still being designed and building had barely begun when we arrived twenty years after the earthquake. This made the town even more attractive as a fieldsite for I could investigate the reconstruction process as it unfolded. In many ways an average town, Calatafimi was known at the time neither for the political extremes of exclusive single-party rule nor for mafia corruption. Relatively uninvolved in the widely publicized scandals of earthquake reconstruction, the town had an additional advantage for me: people were less defensive when asked about the business of building and the flow of state funds.

The winding, mountainous roads leading up to Calatafimi are lined with well-tended vineyards, between the wine-rich zones of Salemi and Alcamo. The medieval

town is perched high on a hill; the elevated site indicates its early origins, when defense determined location.

Although the name of the town recalls its Arab history-- **Kalat** means to descend in Arabic while **a-fimi** refers to Eufemio or the Saracen ruler of the town), its roots are even older.⁷ This town marks a footnote in Italian history as the place Garibaldi and his force of "one thousand" soldiers (**il mille**) launched his first battle in what became a successful effort to unify Italy. And it was in Calatafimi that the soldier, Nino Bixio, was asked, "is that you Bixio, what did you say?" to which he replied with the now famous and oft repeated line, "Here we make Italy or we die." ("E sei vui Bixio, che ò di?"..."Chi, se fa l'Italia ò se mueve.") The town's location near the fine doric temple of Segesta built in the fifth-century by the Elymians also puts Calatafimi on the map.

Two hilltop areas spanning from east to west, one with the remains of a tenth-century Arab fort and a popular bar-restaurant, the other with the town cemetery and an 18th century church, act as a spine along which the town has

7. Pietro Lungo argued in 1810 that prior to the arrival of the Saracens in the 10th century, the town was called Aceste and was a sister town or hamlet linked to the Elymian city of Segesta just to the north (Lungo cited in Nicotra 1907; see also Bruccoleri 1979). He found evidence of very early settlement in the following characteristics of the town: difficult accessibility, links to the River Kaggera, grottoes formed of stone and shelters carved from the cliffsides, cisterns, graves, and grainaries in the style of the pre-Hellenic period, as well as archaeological finds of medallions and tomstones of Greek, Roman, and Carthaginian origins (Lungo in Nicotra 1907).

developed. The different residential areas of the town, distinguished by architectural style and physical boundaries (a church, a major road or cemetery) mark major historical periods of urban development. Local people refer to the town form as a saddle, with the horn and seat-back as the axis and the flaps of the seat as the valleys of later expansion.

The earthquake damage in Calatafimi was estimated to have affected a quarter of the town's building patrimony. We saw only a few indicators of the actual damage twenty years later; unrepaired, often abandoned houses in the old sections still bore the evaluation marks made by the damage-assessment teams: a red-painted X, triangle, or circle next to the front door marked the need for demolition, repair, or the security of the structure, respectively. A more obvious indicator of the earthquake's impact was the bustle of so much new building activity going on in two different areas of the old town.

We had an appointment to meet our guide in a bar in the "center of town," but we could find neither the bar nor the center. Unlike the towns built or restructured during the 16th and 17th centuries, Calatafimi has no pronounced **corso** or main boulevard. An old man led us to one "center:" the men's social clubs at the fork of a narrow street, crowded with parked cars and busy with two-way traffic. Not finding our guide, we inquired further to learn of two other possible "central" **piazze**. Just who

were we looking for? people asked. Ignorant of his surname, we gave our guide's first name and occupation to a group of men, doubtful that this would suffice to locate him and his "center" of town. On the contrary, we were quickly directed to a bar in the lower part of town; we would find him there in the "new **piazza**," the men reassured us.

Indeed, we found our guide immediately, in a **piazza** dating back to the 1920s. After coffee and a brief discussion of my research interests, we drove to the new town, the reconstructed area of Sasi (see Figure 3). Despite the very fancy roadwork, we were surprised to find reconstruction in the new section still largely incomplete: a school, a cooperative apartment block, two popular housing projects, and a few lone examples of private housing all stood isolated from one another, surrounded by cleared land and the rough outline of new roads, some already in disrepair. While in the other towns, reconstruction was anywhere from 50% to 95% completed, in Calatafimi only 10% to 15% of the structures had been built, and of an anticipated population of 1000, only 200 people lived there in 1988. Only 10% of the planned private houses were built, and only two of the eight major public works.

According to our guide, the excessively long delays in Calatafimi's reconstruction were atypical. The local

barrackstown was largely emptied by the early 1980s,⁸ most of its residents having relocated in the old town to await housing in the new section. While in all Belice towns there had been debate and disagreement over the site choice of new towns or new sections, in Calatafimi the struggle over location had been particularly divisive and prolonged. Thus breaking ground on the reconstruction area was postponed years beyond that of other towns.

Echoing the reactions to the new zones of Salemi and Santa Ninfa, the new town in Calatafimi was disparaged by the local population. All inhabitants, from both new and old town sections, complained of its remoteness, of the new requirement of a car to reach the commercial and public town center, and of the new architectural design, which was perceived as "cold" and "inhuman."

In the old town, housing was predominantly private (see Figure 2). The oldest neighborhoods, Burgu and Siccarà, built in the shadow of the Arab fort, were in the process of being abandoned when we arrived. Like Salemi's peripheral old section, these areas were identified and declared as uninhabitable by a regional earthquake law, which demanded that their residents be relocated in the new section. Our guide, a young professional involved in the reconstruction, explained this policy as necessary and rational: the old houses were too small, too dark, even

8. The last of the inhabited barracks were emptied and bulldozed within two weeks after our arrival.

unhygienic. He shook his head in disbelief: some old timers don't want to leave these hovels, he said. They would rather use the old stall as a living room, pass the evenings in their ground floor garage, and use a toilet in the corner of the kitchen. But, he continued, as if to reassure us, this attachment to backwards ways is found only among the very old and poor, the uneducated. "Most people today couldn't live like this," he emphasized; "we have progressed, people today won't settle for a house with less than 120 square meters, four times the size of those crumbling hovels in those dilapidated quarters slated for abandonment."

We went to visit his friend who was in the process of repairing and rebuilding a house in the old town center. Like our hosts in Santa Margherita, this family was proud of their new **palazzo** built with a state subsidy for earthquake damaged houses. They described the different types of marble and ceramic chosen for the floors, then showed us the two large bathrooms and the new **salotto** used for guests and ceremonial occasions. It was a cold and unused room with stiff and formal furniture. I was thankful we were not considered honored guests that chilly afternoon; like family, we took our coffee around the kitchen table. Reiterating our guide's earlier outburst, they claimed that this new type of house was absolutely necessary for their modern life. While they had grown up in the much smaller, older houses in which their parents

still resided, they now needed a modern house for their changing lifestyle, and especially for their children.

A few days later, in the course of finding an apartment I met a woman working at the town hall. She was enthusiastic about my research, and rushed me up to the technical offices to find the paperwork--a thick dossier of plans and approvals--for the house she and her husband were having built. It was a house in the countryside, she explained, far from the traffic and bustle of the town center. She pointed on the houseplan to the rectangular area behind the house: that will be a garden for home-grown vegetables. They planned to build a traditional fireplace on the terrace for cooking "country foods" such as bread and pizza in the "antique way." But the house in these plans was not designed for authentic agriculturalists living in antique ways. There were bedrooms for each child because they needed privacy and a place to study in solitude. There was a room off the kitchen for play and television. The kitchen was of modern design with a dishwasher, laundry machine, and the popular "American" cabinets. Like our guide in Salemi, this woman conceived of her future house as an escape from the town--a quiet, private, domestic retreat for the family to spend its free time and enjoy the comforts of modern life.

In Calatafimi, many of the themes of settlement transformation and social-political changes occasioned by the earthquake were clearly evident. As noted above,

already on that first tour of the town, I learned of the long delays in reconstruction, due in part to the lengthy battle over site location. State-directed changes in urban form were evident in the compulsory abandonment of the older neighborhood and the construction of the new zone under total control of government officials and planners. It was clear that with state entitlements many had achieved housing ideals and consumption standards never reached, never even dreamed of, by their parents. It was also evident that unemployment was a problem and the depressed economy rested on a declining agricultural base and a temporarily subsidized construction industry. People had both accepted and rejected aspects of the state-designed settlements and housing; many had made modifications in their houses or had totally refused residence in either the old or the new settlement, moving to the surrounding countryside instead. In short, even this brief acquaintance with Calatafimi suggested a version of the processes I had observed throughout the Belice.

After a few visits I was convinced that Calatafimi was an appropriate site for fieldwork. My husband and I moved there in the winter of 1988, and spent nine months living in an apartment in the newer section of the old town.⁹

9. Our earliest informants and go-betweens in the housing market would not consider our settling in the old neighborhoods now being abandoned. When I insisted that we at least look at this housing, I was told there were no rentals available in those areas. In retrospect, I imagine they thought it unseemly and undignified to have two

From here I gathered data. I was guided around the various sections of the town, learning about neighborhood histories, boundaries, and differences. I was shown people's houses and told of the changes since the earthquake. I also conducted a more systematic study of census data and building and zoning records to corroborate interview findings. Questioning informants from different socio-economic strata, I collected residential histories of families and their houses. I also spent time that first year participating in a local civil-religious festival, socializing with friends and their families at the beach or in the vineyards, eating fine food and sharing the strong local wines. Interviews with political figures, planners, and technical building personnel from three different Belize towns gave me a perspective on state goals and methods of implementing reconstruction plans. I followed this fieldwork with another visit to the Belize during the summer of 1990, when I was able to check my results and conclusions with my informants. My interviews during this period were more directed and purposeful, aimed at acquiring detailed information. I doubt I could have expected honest answers to such direct questioning had I not already spent a year living with these people, participating in their daily life, and cultivating relationships of friendship and trust.

American researchers visiting their town and living in what they considered the poorest, oldest housing.

CHAPTER III

PROTEST AND THE NEW POLITICS OF THE EARTHQUAKED

1. INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the Belice earthquake of 1968, thousands came together to establish a grassroots political movement that lasted on and off for years. With its wide-reaching goals and inventive techniques, the protest movement of the Valley anticipated the student-worker revolts and the feminist movement of the 1970s. And the institutional reactions to the protests by the labor unions, political parties, and ultimately by the central government established precedents for an organized response to later political upheaval.

Despite the total disruption of everyday life, the complete absence of residential security and comfort, and the destruction of the traditional political places--the bar, **piazza**, or town hall--the protests were organized as a well-articulated expression of popular will. The newly identified "earthquaked" (**terremotati**) of the newly identified region, "the Belice," in fact represented a novel coalition of different classes, occupational groups, and even sexes who defined themselves as victims of the earthquake with shared political interests in the future development of the region. As the protests gained momentum, the goals of the mobilized population became comprehensive and far-reaching, including a demand for

large-scale economic development in conjunction with residential and town reconstruction.

The victims of the Belice earthquake were in no way passive recipients of (delayed) state assistance during those first years. Despite a common portrayal in the contemporary media of the peasant classes of the Italian South as politically apathetic and disorganized, the politics of the Belice discussed in this chapter demonstrate the capacity and willingness of these people to conceptualize a new and different future and to fight valiantly for its realization. The protest movement was a grassroots phenomenon based on the participation of many barrackstown inhabitants, loosely directed by citizens' groups and a few progressive local politicians.

The barrackstown residents looked to the government as the primary institution responsible for disaster relief, reconstruction, and economic development. While the movement's agenda was largely economic, the focus and techniques of the Belice protesters were primarily political. The movement was directed solely at state power, a state characterized by bureaucratic inefficiency, mafia influence, and clientelism. Citizens' groups expected the state would assume responsibility for the development of both productive and consumptive spheres of the local economy. Central to the protest was the goal that reconstruction be linked to far-reaching economic development, that is, a development plan to balance out the

long-standing structural inequalities between the Italian North and South.

The Belice popular movement called for immediate government action but wanted to reject welfare-type handouts (**assistenzialismo**) that would fuel corruption in local political networks and increase dependency of the local population on state entitlements.¹ They eschewed forms of relief that placed recipients in passive positions. Instead they called for continued popular participation and for the state to accept and integrate these new forms of political expression which arose in the aftermath of the earthquake. Basically, citizens envisioned a transformation in the structures of economic organization and political representation as they had been established and maintained by the central government. As we will see, the ultimate results of the movement failed to realize the ambitions of the protesters.

The expression of opposition and the organization of protest occurred as a reaction to the ways the state disappointed the expectations of the local population in the course of its official response to disaster.

1. During 1968, the state offered the families of those killed by the earthquake one million lire for each death and 500,000 lire for each building lost. A leading citizens' group rejected this offer; they wanted compensation to be tied to production. Cash, they argued, would do little good in the chaos of disaster aftermath. Instead, for each death, they asked for a truck or a tractor; for each building lost they requested grape vines or olive trees. In this way they hoped to revitalize agriculture and generate economic growth (Barbera 1980a: 55-58).

Government mismanagement and intolerable delays angered the population, as did particular state policies such as that facilitating large-scale demolition of damaged (but repairable) structures. Additionally, there was strong opposition to the government policy encouraging migration away from the area--a policy seen as divisive, when unity and commitment were necessary for a quick and effective reconstruction.

In this chapter I discuss the rise of this protest movement and the state's reaction to it. I begin by describing the roots of the protest against the state policies. I discuss the emergence of a new regional identity which served as the basis for the social movement. Description of the new and effective techniques of protest and the very ambitious political and economic objectives of the protesters follows. Finally, I try to place this protest and the government's response to it in a larger theoretical context of urban social movements and general patterns of power as exercised over citizens by their governments.

2. DEMOLITION AND EMIGRATION

Two phenomena, excessive demolition and massive emigration, significantly delayed the reconstruction process. Because whole towns and parts of others were obliterated by demolition crews, reconstruction had to start in many cases from ground up, *tabula rasa*. Scant

attention was paid to options for repair and restoration during that first year. Rather, the provision of food and water, services, and temporary shelter occupied the disaster relief effort. As tens of thousands fled the area, the remaining population was scattered and the process of reconstituting civic and urban life seriously interrupted.

Demolition began only days after the earthquake as technicians employed by the provincial and town governments instructed wrecking companies to plow under destroyed towns and knockdown damaged buildings. In the name of public safety, the remains of some of the most badly damaged towns, Gibellina, Salaparuta, and Poggioreale, were dynamited. Many public monuments and architectural centerpieces were demolished although people asserted that they were salvageable. Rather than build a new roof over the main church of Salemi, the entire structure was brought down. To the continuing dismay of many residents, floors and walls, solid and intact, fell under the wrecking ball. Widespread demolition was not limited to Salemi but was widespread throughout the Belice. As one reporter put it in a headline just days after the earthquake: "To the wreckage of the earthquake, we must now add that of the bulldozer" (*Giornale di Sicilia* 24 January 1968).

Both financial and psychological explanations have been offered for the excessive demolition. Many argue that it was in the financial interests of the wrecking crews and

technicians to demolish as much as possible, as quickly as possible, in order to secure additional reconstruction work. In an area of high unemployment, where schemes to make work are considered clever and necessary, this explanation has many adherents.² Other critics argue that the unrestrained demolition was motivated by an attempt to wipe out the historical memory of poverty and hunger, as well as the short-term memories of death and destruction caused by the earthquake. For them, the wrecking ball and dynamite constituted a catharsis of sorts, destroying the past to begin anew. In any case, the Belice population was incensed by the presumption and power of the technicians who brought about such destruction in the wake of disaster.

Massive out-migration further hindered the response and reconstruction efforts. Emigration from the Belice Valley was propelled by a variety of internal and external factors. During the first eight months following the earthquake, a total of 24,000 people fled from western Sicily (*Giornale di Sicilia* 17 January 1969), leaving the area seriously impaired by the shortage of an active labor force. The flight of so many not only discouraged those

2. This perspective recalls the popular view of reforestation projects in Sicily. Temporary crews hired to plant the new trees are frequently accused of igniting forest fires in order to insure themselves future work. Interviewed reforestation workers admit to this subterfuge, explaining it as an unfortunate necessity--to protect the immediate family from insecurity at the expense of the distant, impersonal, and wealthy state.

who remained, it also distorted estimates of reconstruction housing requirements.

Earthquake refugees rushed to the industrial cities of northern Europe and Italy, and overseas to Australia and the United States. The Italian government facilitated this exodus by providing free railroad tickets and rapidly issuing passports, even without photographs. Countries in northern Europe, such as Switzerland and Germany, offered housing and work to the earthquake victims (Barbera 1980a: 23-26). Other national governments provided free transportation out of the earthquake area and arranged jobs in their countries for the Belice victims. While some interpret this as a goodwill gesture on the part of those foreign governments, others see it as part of the continuing policy to encourage a cheap, exploitable labor force to relocate in their industrial areas.

The numbers are staggering and make sense of pleas at the time to stem "our diaspora" (*L'Orsa* 12-13 September 1969). In the first ten days following the earthquake, 10,000 refugees fled to northern Italian cities. Some stayed with friends and relatives while others camped in tunnels on the back roads of Milan (*Corriere della Sera* 24 January 1968; *L'Orsa* 19 August 1968). In the three days following the January 25th aftershock, at least 40,000 additional refugees took advantage of the free railroad tickets. Santa Margherita lost nearly 25% of its population, while inhabitants of completely destroyed towns

such as Gibellina were truly "scattered to the four winds" (L'Ora 12-13 September 1969). A thousand, that is, a third of those from Montevago, left for Switzerland. At least 700 from the earthquake towns in the province of Palermo went to Australia, "the most lacerating distance" of all (Giornale di Sicilia 16 January 1969; L'Ora 12-13 September 1969).³

Massive emigration continued during those first weeks, despite attempts by town politicians, citizens' groups, and the media to discourage flight and encourage participation of all in the disaster response. Headlines read, "We Need Everyone" and "Don't Leave: There Will Be Work For Everybody" (L'Ora 29 January 1968; Giornale di Sicilia 30 January 1968). But free tickets to Australia, promises of steady work, and easily accessible passports and work permits, proved too attractive to stem the exodus from this economically underdeveloped and now devastated area.

3. One of the refugees discussed his family's desperate experience in Australia to illustrate what was meant by the "diaspora." They left with 60 others from Gibellina, with "free" passage on the railroad and boat. Once in Australia, they were provided housing in barracks which were "much worse" than those in the Belice Valley, and given jobs with which they could reimburse the costs of passage (Barbera 1980a: 24). This refugee felt trapped; he could not afford to stay in Australia because his wages were inadequate to cover the high costs of housing, medicine, insurance, etc. Having his wife work as well was not an alternative since childcare costs were prohibitively high. Nor could he get back home to Sicily; he used his meager wages to repay his passage and for daily living expenses, and thus could not save the money for return tickets. Finally, relatives back home contributed to buy the tickets and he returned with his wife and children to live in a barracks school in the Gibellina barrackstown (L'Ora 12-13 September 1969).

Although emigrants were attracted to the benefits of flight, they were even more compelled to leave by the very poor conditions of employment and housing, initially in the tent cities and later in the barrackstowns. For instance, barracks housing was far from adequate in Santa Margherita one year after the earthquake. Each family was assigned a room and a half; 2,200 barracks had been built for the 8000 needy inhabitants, while 550 were still in the planning stages. These conditions, argued one journalist, largely explain the exodus of 1700 from that town (**Giornale di Sicilia** 16 January 1969). Likewise, only 782 barracks were built by January 1969 for the diminished Camporeale population (from 5962 to 5266). And of these barracks, 400 remained unassigned due to the absence of water, light, and sewage services. In short, emigration was a popular response to the possibilities offered elsewhere by the governments of Italy and beyond, as well as to the intolerably poor conditions resulting from the government's inadequate disaster relief effort in the Belice.

3. NEW POLITICS: "THE BELICE AGAINST EVERYBODY"

Before the earthquake, there was no "Belice" as it is known today. The earthquake followed the fault lines between two rivers, the Fiume Freddo and the Fiume Belice. The area alternates between sparsely vegetated mountains and valleys of poor chalky soil. No sharp delineations of economic activity defined it; the extensive cultivation of

cereal crops predominated here as in most of the western Sicilian interior. The absence of any irrigation system utilizing the two rivers meant that what might have been a potential source of common identity and interest was irrelevant. With regard to administrative status, the towns of the Belice Valley fall within the three provinces of Palermo, Trapani, and Agrigento, with damage most heavily concentrated in the latter two. Although some towns traditionally did business together (such as Alcamo and Calatafimi) and others often exchanged marriage partners (such as Santa Margherita and Sambuca), community inter-relations were commonly characterized by competition, suspicion, and disparagement. Each town had its own patron saint, its own dialect, specific rules regarding dowry and post-marital residence, and its own myth granting historical precedence to the town site and shape.⁴ The absence of a decent road network in interior of Western Sicily further impeded inter-village ties. (Mack Smith 1968: 400, 513; P. Schneider 1972). At the time of the

4. Popular myth in Calatafimi recounts the story of two oxen pulling a heavy cart until they dropped. It was at that spot the town was founded. The eagle-like shape of the town is explained in some variants of the story as the shape of the bird that flew over the cart when it stopped, indicating to spectators the location of the fallen beasts. Other towns have similar stories; nearby Alcamo, for instance, also begins with the two oxen dragging the heavy cart (see Nicotra 1907). Italy has long been symbolically linked with the oxen; in fact, some argue that the etymology of "Italia" stems from the ancient Roman word for "land of the oxen" (Elkins 1993: 58).

earthquake, then, the towns affected shared little in terms of political and social unity.

And yet, at this period the structures of national culture, politics, and economics were convulsing with change. Italy of the late 1960s and 1970s was characterized by an "extraordinary period of social ferment" (Ginsborg 1990: 298). Emerging out of the student uprisings of the universities and the militant labor organization of northern factories, collective movements associated with the progressive Left affected all segments of Italian society. Large-scale economic development associated with rapid industrial expansion had enormous impact on Italy's economy. "In less than two decades Italy ceased to be a peasant country and became one of the major industrial nations of the West. The very landscape of the country as well as its inhabitants' places of abode and ways of life changed profoundly" (Ginsborg 1990: 212). The routines and expectations of daily life in western Sicily were radically transformed by these trends.

It was within and between the barrackstowns that the new politics of the Belice first developed. The politics of protest stressed the conscious self-identification of the area and its inhabitants. It repudiated the town-by-town provincialism of the past and supplanted the previous fractured identity based on geography and a shared agricultural economy (Caldo 1974:97) with one based on shared political objectives:

Often the political struggle moved in a different direction: the Belice against the region, the Belice against the state, the Belice against everybody. This was a consequence of the political tremors caused by the earthquake. It was the awakening among the rubble of houses, of a provincially-based political identity no longer directed by distant and centralized powers. [Caldo 1974: 97]

Natural disasters frequently foster this identification of unity among the victims. As Robert Geipel notes, after the Friuli earthquake in 1976, the "catastrophe stimulated this emotional feeling of distinctiveness" among otherwise ethnically different and geographically isolated people (Geipel 1982: 15). In the case of the Belice, a new identity of shared victimization, past and present, a victimization with which all those on the margins of Italian society could peripherally associate, served to bind the population together. The movement also attracted the attention of others, outside the region, who felt frustrated by the same impotence as that endured by the earthquake victims. One informant described the earthquake as: "A geographical earthquake, an earthquake of the unemployed and of the emigrant, an earthquake of the youth, an earthquake of the **popolino** (little people, or masses), the powerless" (cited in Barbera 1980a: 47).

The Belice population soon moved beyond a notion of shared victimization as the central feature of their new identity. This turned out to be an astute political

decision since it was by just this criterion that the national media and hostile politicians tended to define the Belice population--powerless victims waiting for handouts. According to some more cynical outsiders, it was the ignorance of the Belice population which caused such devastation during the earthquake; their houses fell on them because they knew little about reinforced concrete (Sciascia cited in Marino 1968: 49). Similarly, their participation in demonstrations was portrayed as a function of their simplicity; they were the unknowing dupes of a communist conspiracy (in Barbera 1980a: 48). Even Danilo Dolci, the self-described champion of Sicily's poor, sought internal causes to explain the devastation of the Belice population, which, he argued, was underdeveloped because of "anthro-socio-psycho-technico-cultural causes"! (cited in Barbera 1980a: 83). Rather than be seen as pathetic and needy victims, citizens' groups necessarily redefined themselves in new and different terms in the effort to transform the inferior situation of the Belice and its population.

Protest leaders resented the media's characterizations of the Belice victims. Their sense of injustice was "almost biblical"; while assaulted by nature and neglected by the state, they found the tendency of the press to blame them for their fate intolerable. They were often referred to pitifully as "those poor people." More offensive were the attacks of "parasitism," of being "earthquaked for

life," and being "professionally earthquaked."⁵ These latter characterizations show the increasingly frequent attempts to blame the Belice population itself for the delays and problems of reconstruction they were forced to endure. Thus, by rejecting the identity of victim and substituting an identity based on shared political and economic objectives, the leaders of the protest challenged stereotypes propagated by the national media and redirected the movement.

In summary, during the first year following the earthquake, political gatherings and collective actions drew people together as inhabitants of "the Belice." They were empowered by the recognition that they were not helpless in the face of state authority but instead could demand a role in the reconstruction of their homes and towns. Citizens' groups further saw the destruction of the traditional political structures as the occasion for new forms of direct democratic participation. The political climate had changed and all wanted to voice their opinions. They did so as a group representing different classes and different towns linked by shared goals for the future development of their region. For the first time the poor and illiterate peasant might be solicited by a national labor union or communicate directly to government ministers and senators. This in no way reflected a new openness on

5. These derogatory labels are cited in *Gazzetta del Sud* of 14 January 1988; *Giornale di Sicilia* of 15 January 1988; and *Giornale di Sicilia* of 14 January 1969, respectively.

the part of the government institutions or national political leaders, but rather the tenacity and imaginative methods used by the Belice citizens' groups to reach and be heard by the upper levels of state power.

4. GOALS AND TECHNIQUES OF THE CITIZENS' MOVEMENT

Post-earthquake politics was a grassroots movement. It has been called an "awakening" (*sveglia*) because so many people mobilized to demand emergency assistance, rapid and complete reconstruction, comprehensive economic development, and a direct role in determining the course of their own future. This awakening is remarkable in light of the traditional power structures so deeply entrenched in western Sicilian society and history.

Before the earthquake, local elites controlled party politics and town administrations. With many of the young and active population absent working jobs in northern industry, the status quo was rarely challenged.⁶ Local elites and mafia bosses exercised a strangle hold on government resources and functions. The Christian Democratic Party (DC), the largest of the South and a senior partner in every postwar government, stood at the

6. In the 1930s and 1940s, the Fascist government did what it could to centralize control over the western Sicilian countryside and derail the mediating role of mafia middlemen in local politics. But, the Fascist attempt went only so far and with the defeat of Fascism the mafia and landed elite quickly reasserted themselves (Hess 1973; Mack Smith 1968: 526-8).

center of a vast patronage network (Chubb 1982). Local political elections were influenced more by clientelism and friendship ties than by party ideology or policy orientations (Caldo 1974: 85, 98-99). Town politics were dominated by individual men (*don*, sing.) formidable by virtue of their exclusive links to outside power and their ability to deliver votes to the party machine with some help from the priests.

This structure of limited and exclusive access to political expression was profoundly shaken in the aftermath of the earthquake. There was an explosion in patterns of political participation throughout the Belice. New forms of association, including citizens' committees, popular assemblies, workers' cooperatives, and intercommunal groups, blossomed. New democratic bodies eschewed traditional party loyalties and the clientelistic politics of the past. As Caldo points out, Belice citizens' groups insisted on direct participation and rejected rule by a distant centralized party hierarchy, particularly with regard to reconstruction and economic development (Caldo 1974: 98-99).

This is not to say the Belice population retreated from electoral politics, but that voting became only one among many avenues of protest. In the years immediately following the earthquake (1968-1972), voting records

indicate strong support of the Communist Party (PCI)⁷ relative to the rest of Sicily. While comparison of election results demonstrates an overall decline in PCI membership in Sicily and Italy during that time, support remained relatively strong (just behind that of the Christian Democrats) in the Belice (Caldo 1974: 99). This represents a remarkable turnaround in what was once so solidly a DC area. Another form of electoral protest used by the Belice population was the **scheda bianca** or "white card," the refusal to endorse any of the candidates or parties. This blank ballot of protest increased from 3% to 6% of the total vote in 1968, the year following the earthquake (Caldo 1974: 100).⁸

Importantly, the protest was a cross-class movement with wide appeal. As newspapers were quick to point out: "All the Earthquaked Are United in Pain and Protest!" (*L'Or*a 10 July 1968). People from various social and economic groups shared similar complaints about the temporary residential conditions and the long delays in the provision of services and permanent housing. Many protesters came from the poor, agricultural proletariat, previously excluded from a significant role in political institutions and actions (Barbera 1980a: 33).

7. The PCI has since become the PDS, Democratic Party of the Left.

8. Prior to the earthquake, the **scheda bianca** was more the result of illiteracy than an explicit political expression (Caldo 1974: 100).

When citizens' groups proclaimed direct democratic control over reconstruction and economic development the primary objectives of the social movement, many from the middle and upper-middle class became involved. Teachers in particular played a significant role in the mobilizations, as did university students, shopkeepers, and professionals. Although not all the earthquakeed participated in the protests, enough did for these protests to be considered a cross-class movement. Furthermore, women assumed a participatory role in the protests. Often at the forefront of some of the more radical actions (e.g., tax resistance) during this time, they contradicted the stereotype of the southern woman as tradition-bound, tied to home, and uninvolved with politics.⁹ With irony, activists appropriated and turned upside down media stereotypes of them as **imbrogliapopolo** or "troublemakers."

These troublemakers did not act alone. While most church figures and conservative politicians "sprouted hemorrhoids from their heads, tossing and turning all night" with anxiety about the protest, other local power holders allied themselves with the citizens' movement (Barbera 1980a: 118). Leftist political leaders were especially important during the early protests of 1968 and

9. Women were at the forefront of some of the many protests against state inaction after the 1908 earthquake in Messina. For instance, in 1924 the women of Messina's shantytowns took to the streets, marching and chanting angrily, "we want houses, houses to free us from filth" (L'Ora 11 April 1969).

some have since entered the national political arena.¹⁰ Some mayors, Communist and otherwise, were also active proponents of the popular movement, visiting Rome on behalf of their constituents two or three times during that first year, even threatening to resign if government assistance was further delayed (see, for example, **Giornale di Sicilia** 2 July 1968). Some Church figures and non-aligned citizens' advocates were also important in the post-earthquake political sphere, lending support and legitimacy to the claims of the protesters.

A study center directed by Lorenzo Barbera, Centro studi e iniziative Valle Belice, was a guiding force in the early stages. Barbera was initially associated with the internationally recognized project of Danilo Dolci to provide full employment in the depressed, underdeveloped Sicilian interior. He broke off from the Dolci project in Partinico to organize the Partanna Study Center and expanded the goals of progressive politics and social change to include democratic control of post-earthquake planning and development.¹¹

10. Some of the more important leftist and independent intellectuals and politicians during the early stages of protest were: Gibellina's long-time mayor, Ludovico Corrao (still serving at the time of this fieldwork in 1988), the Santa Ninfa mayor, Vito Bellafiore, who later became a senator, and the Sambuca politician, G. Montalbano, who became a senator as well.

11. The Dolci project started in 1957 with a grant of 16 million lire from the Lenin Foundation for Peace. Initially there were five centers in western Sicily (in Cammarata, Menfi, Corleone, Roccamena, and Partinico), but after three years only the latter two remained. The volunteers came from all over the world, and some remained

The methods of political opposition were imaginative and caught the attention of the press, the general public, and national political officials. There were countless letter-writing campaigns and petitions sent to government representatives in Rome. At least seven mass marches were organized, both to national and regional government offices in Rome and Palermo, and throughout the earthquake zone. Conferences, intercommunal meetings, and popular assemblies became commonplace. General strikes in the different towns demanded attention from regional and national political powers. People blocked roads, held all-night vigils, and fasted during hunger strikes. I describe some of the more significant measures adopted by the protesters in the following pages.

THE FIRST NATIONAL APPEAL

The national government issued a decree in mid-February, a month after the earthquake, with recommendations regarding the government's responsibilities

to carry on the program of progressive politics and social change in Sicily, free from the autocratic hand of Dolci. These activists continued to push for Dolci's initial goal of full-employment--i.e., the strike for work--as well as general economic development and planning of the Belice. Barbera was one of these. His Study Center in the town of Partanna was of strategic importance to the popular movement of the Belice. Although menaced by death-threats, firebombs, and the repeated burglary of his barrack, he continued to run his center until 1972 (Barbera 1980a, 1980b). Barbera later went to Irpinia in 1981 to organize the victims of the 1980 earthquake there, and to remind the public of the problems and mistakes made in the course of the Belice reconstruction (Barbera 1982).

and specifying the financial support planned for disaster relief and reconstruction. It was followed immediately by protests from citizens' groups pointing out the inadequacies of the decree. In response to the decree, the study centers and various tent-city committees publicized an appeal to the national government in which they presented the short-term and long-term demands of the stricken population. Because this National Appeal exemplifies the methods and goals of later actions, I describe it in some detail.

As emergency measures, the citizens' groups requested appropriate medical care in the tent-cities and a sufficient number of barracks for those without housing. They called for the employment of local residents in agriculture and reconstruction, and the immediate resumption of childrens' schooling, if necessary in the prefabricated barracks. In terms of long-range goals, the protesters wanted assurance that popular participation would be central to the planning and reconstruction process. Advocating the exclusion of mafia-backed firms from the bidding on contracts to construct the new towns, they wanted local firms to be given preferential consideration. They demanded that the management of planning and construction be made public, following set legal schedules and deadlines, as opposed to the mere suggestions for time limitations included in the governmental decree.

Economic development was the most important theme of this first appeal. The citizens' groups called on the government to invest 200 billion lire in the local economy. To direct this investment, they provided a detailed list of productive enterprises capable of offering sustained employment and long-term benefits to the Belice population. In terms of agricultural development, the appeal stipulated the construction of dikes for irrigation, the reforestation of eroded land and stripped hillsides, and the provision of greenhouses for growing speciality crops for export. Proposed small-business enterprises included cooperatives for wine production and processing plants for milk products, almonds, fruits, and vegetables. The citizens' groups argued for an infrastructure to develop small industry and tourism, and for improved road networks to link the towns and facilitate commercial interchange (Barbera 1980a: 33-37). The popular appeal also stipulated the need for 50,000 anti-seismic housing units and 5000 rural buildings at an estimated cost of 500 billion lire.

This nationally publicized appeal illustrates the citizens' recognition that a comprehensive program of sustained economic development was essential to their future well-being. They argued that it would create a viable productive base and provide much needed employment possibilities in the area. The appeal typifies the quick and ambitious, yet carefully considered responses of local groups during that first year after the earthquake. While

its broad range and the high level of popular participation were exceptional, the demands of the movement were similar to those articulated previously by landless workers and the unemployed.¹² Beyond the context of the earthquake, the differences at this juncture were the techniques employed, the large number of participants involved and their cross-class composition, the comprehensive vision of political and economic change, and the national attention received.

THE MARCH ON ROME

This is the first time I've been away from my mule for more than ten days...I'm so happy because I saw with my own eyes the faces of so many ministers and presidents, I heard with my own ears the voice of the state. [a peasant, quoted in Barbera 1980a: 167]

Less than two months after the earthquake, 2500 protesters marched through the streets of Rome to gather in front of Montecitorio, the seat of the Italian Parliament. While many came from the northern cities to which they fled after the earthquake, the majority arrived by train from Sicily. It is surprising they arrived at all considering the obstacles they encountered on the state-owned railroad line. Police and railroad workers blocked passengers from

12. Less than a year before the earthquake more than 1500 peasants and unemployed workers marched 180 kilometers from Partanna to Palermo to request infrastructure for agricultural development. Specifically, they called for new roads, dams and dikes, agricultural cooperatives, and an end to emigration (Barbera 1980a: 7-9). Thus, the demands set forth by the citizens' committees and the Study Center in 1968 were not entirely new or unfamiliar.

entering train cars, the trains were delayed again and again as they crossed the island, and the ferryboat across the Straits of Messina was headed in the wrong direction until the protesters threatened the crew. The central government was obviously trying to discourage the participants of this mass protest action.

Despite these obstacles, the Belice delegation entered Rome dramatically, marching 2500 strong through central city streets and setting up camp opposite the Parliament. Many Romans were sympathetic to the ragged bunch of refugees led by citizens' advocates and the more active Belice mayors. Roman church groups, cultural associations, cinema personalities, students, unionists, and squatters joined the earthquake victims on marches and donated supplies for their temporary tent city. This supportive reception was not replicated inside the halls of Parliament, however.¹³

The demands of the Belice group in Rome reiterated those of the National Appeal from the month before. According to the delegation's statement, long-term economic development of the Belice should be the first goal of reconstruction. Priority requests were for the provision of infrastructure and financing in support of industry and agricultural improvement. The statement included demands

13. Many of the protesters were denied admission on the grounds of improper attire until a clever merchant sold them the obligatory neckties at inflated prices at the doors of the government building.

that the government decree of February become law, with explicit deadlines and responsibilities to guarantee accountability. A comprehensive law aimed at ending the economic dependency of the earthquake victims was also proposed. It was to have superceded the previous law which consisted of unrelated interventions. According to the protesters, this piecemeal approach had been aimed at appeasing those placed strategically in clientelistic political networks (Barbera 1980a: 46-54) and it had no bearing on the viability of the region. In addition, spokespeople loudly and repeatedly complained of speculation by "politician-profiteers" (**Corriere della Sera** 3 March 1968). They wanted government assurances that in the planning and construction of the new towns, the mafia would be excluded while popular participation be ensured.

In response to the demands of the 2500, the national government made concessions. The earthquake decree did become law, and verbal promises were made to exclude mafia from the reconstruction process. Reconstruction financing was increased to include an additional 41 billion lire for roads, highways, and rural infrastructure. Furthermore, an interministerial committee was established to plan long-term development of industry in the area (Barbera 1980a: 46-60).

Yet, the Belice population left Rome profoundly disappointed. The government had not accepted the demand for popular participation in the reconstruction process,

nor had it explicitly excluded mafia clientelism from the process by means of legally stipulated restrictions. The decree-turned-law failed to establish deadlines and assign specific responsibilities to different offices and ministries. More seriously, it contrived to set forth piecemeal interventions, based primarily on welfare-type assistance to individual victims rather than a comprehensive plan of social and economic development for the area (Barbera 1980a: 46-60).

THE "HOT SUMMER" OF 1968

The National Appeal of February and the March on Rome in March laid the groundwork for the "hot summer" of 1968 in the Belice Valley.¹⁴ In that summer alone thousands of Belice residents took part in numerous protest actions: six protest marches (three of them in Palermo), at least two general strikes in different Belice towns, two conferences regarding the problems of earthquake victims and plans for reconstruction, one road blocking, an all-night vigil, and a hunger fast. Some local mayors were especially active during this period, participating in the popular protests and travelling to Rome again and again to demand government attention to citizens' requests.

14. The first reference I can find of the term "hot summer" antedates the national, more famous "hot autumn" movement of students and workers (L'Ora 12 July 1969). Lumley documents the borrowing of the "hot autumn" term from the American media, which used the "hot summer" term to refer to urban riots in the United States (Lumley 1990: 208).

These mayors took part in the important protest march of July 9th to the seat of regional government in Palermo. The Belice towns bussed in 15,000 protesters to agitate for attention and assistance from the regional government. It was the "march of the poor on the impoverished city," proclaimed one local newspaper (*Giornale di Sicilia* 10 July 1968). This time the regional government leaders did not respond with empty promises. Instead, the surprise of unanticipated violence marked the reaction of Regional President Carollo (*L'Ora* 9 July 1968). Protesters were kicked, beaten, and chased away. Tear gas was used and men, women, and children were indiscriminately attacked (*Giornale di Sicilia* 20 January 1970). Barbera argues that police violence was used both to pacify the increasingly vocal protesters and to humiliate the political figures involved (Barbera 1980a: 62-66). The violent reception to their peaceful protest convinced the Belice groups that the regional government was even more hostile to their demands than the national government had been.

The popular trial was yet another expression of collective protest against the state. For instance, an open trial was conducted in Roccamena, a town on the eastern edge of the Belice zone led by a mayor who was very active in the protest movement. For three days hundreds of participants occupied the central **piazza** in a mock trial of the officials and politicians responsible for major earthquake reconstruction. The people's tribunal

pronounced the absent defendants guilty of neglect and corruption. Their towns remained in a dangerous state of ill repair; there was little or no local employment in the reconstruction, and lucrative contracts were bestowed on firms with known mafia connections.

Public letters printed in newspapers and in pamphlet form were common methods of popular protest. In a letter addressed to Guiseppe Saragat, President of the Republic (1964-1971), protesters demanded government adherence to long-standing promises for economic development (e.g., a dam for irrigation offered in 1963). They also called in promises made during the first days following the disaster to provide emergency assistance for adequate housing, potable water, sanitary services, and so on. The letter closed with a plea for the government's active intervention into the local economy to stop the flow of emigration from the zone. A paragraph in this letter summarizes the persistent themes of historical injustice and the ironic desire for self-determination common to all the Belice protest statements during that first year.

We have built all over the world. Now we want to build a new world in our own land, with our own hands, using our own intelligence. [Letter to Saragat, 10 October 1968, cited in Barbera 1980a: 72]

Later expressions of protest questioned state authority and control in a more direct manner. In 1970, the protesters confronted the state in order to exempt

Belice youths from mandatory national conscription. Local men and their families objected to the state's requirement that they invest 18 months learning techniques of military violence when they were needed to assist with the reconstruction of their homes. The Anti-Draft Committee and its various chapters were established by citizens' groups to organize resistance and teach the young men how to refuse. When the government issued summonses in an attempt to call their bluff, the draft evaders voluntarily went to prison en masse, only to be turned away at the door. Upon being served their summonses a second time, the resisters hired busses to take them to Palermo in a united front of protest. Police blocked the busses as they departed; and when the protesters tried to transfer to private cars the police stopped them at gunpoint. Not deterred, the young men alighted from the cars and started the nearly 60 kilometer hike by foot to Palermo. An armed police roadblock on a deserted interior road finally stopped the procession. The youths, with their journey to the capital frustrated, set up a roadside camp to wait out the confrontation. A few days later, Colonel of the Carabinieri, Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa, and Minister of Defense, Mario Tanassi, finally agreed to allow them to substitute military service with civil service in the reconstruction effort.

Five months later the draft resisters were imprisoned for evading the draft. At this point (9 November 1970) the

mille, or "the thousand," Belice protesters marched on Rome again to demand that the government uphold the promises made by Dalla Chiesa and Tanassi. This self-ascribed label, *il mille*, recalls "the thousand" in Garibaldi's army that, having landed in Sicily from the continent, marched north in a successful effort to unify the Italian peninsula. Although President Saragat granted official amnesty a second time, the Christian Democratic Minister of Defense responsible for making the amnesty legal postponed the process again and again. These delays angered the **mille**, who led increasingly aggressive protests through the streets of Rome, accusing the government ministers of collusion and mafia involvement. The riot police were called when the national police, the Carabinieri, had refused to break up the protests. The result was arrests accompanied by violence, the dismantling of the tent city and the dispersing of the protesters (Barbera 1980a: 127-142). Instead, President Saragat castigated the police and insured the full passage of the civil service law exempting the Belice soldiers from military duty (Barbera 1980a: 156). This struggle was exceptional because it achieved a measure of success.

The **mille** did not restrict their demands to amnesty alone. They met with the Minister of Labor, who promised 75 billion lire earmarked for worker housing (to be built by the state housing agency, Gestione Casa Lavoratori or GESCAL) and a factory for aluminium processing. National

attention was turned toward the protesters during the march of the *mille*. There were interviews and extensive coverage on television and radio, and Roman workers frequently joined the demonstrations. In fact, following the police demolition of the tent city, the earthquakeed population rebuilt the temporary settlement and marched through the streets again, this time with 9000 Roman supporters, calling for, among other requests, a national government free of corruption (Barbera 1980a: 166-176).

Another victory for the Belice protest movement, perhaps even more unexpected than exoneration from the military draft, was the resistance to state taxes on costs associated with consumption and services. Sensing that the state was unable or unwilling to meet its self-imposed deadline of 1971 for reconstruction, Belice protestors countered with a tax boycott. On 7 December 1969, the intercommunal popular assembly, meeting in Santa Ninfa, proclaimed the government an "outlaw" (**fuori legge**). The variety of boycotts employed the following year led some observers to call 1970 "the year of three nails" (**anno dei tre chiodi**). Caldo (1974: 87) describes them as 1) The government is an outlaw, 2) Don't pay taxes, and 3) Plan for Survival. In Santa Margherita's popular assembly where participants decided to refuse to pay for state-owned electricity. Partanna's popular assembly went further, adding a boycott on paying television and radio fees as well as a refusal to pay for the dirty and inadequate water

piped into the barrackstowns. In Gibellina, the popular assembly adopted these principles of non-payment and withheld payment of automobile taxes as well (Caldo 1974: 87-88; Barbera 1980a: 107-113).

The tax revolt movement spread quickly throughout the earthquaked towns and enjoyed great popular support. Despite threats to imprison town mayors and party leaders, despite the pleas of priests that fiscal obligations be met, a full 99% of the Belice population withheld payments to government-owned companies (Barbera 1980a: 107-113). The unpaid bills were gathered by a group of women and sent in bulk to the National Treasury Minister, who promptly sent them back to the towns. The state-owned and operated electricity company threatened to break off service to the barrackstowns.¹⁵ The company employees sent to cut the lines had to be persuaded by their police escorts to deprive the Belice towns of electricity. Illegally connected energy lines were set up so quickly afterwards that some claim the company employees themselves assisted the local population in this endeavor.

Meanwhile, public opinion urged capitulation to the demands of the Belice protesters. The national media portrayed the government as stingy and petty during the fight for the dispensation of electricity rates. The press

15. The conflict with the energy company was especially bitter as many had been without any electricity for long periods after moving to the barrackstowns (*L'Ora* 2-3 April 1969).

and television coverage of the barrackstowns--already filthy and horrible--falling dark and cold at the hand of the government's energy company was dramatic and pathetic. Moreover, Barbera argues that the government feared the tax revolt movement would spread throughout the Mezzogiorno if left unchecked (Barbera 1980a: 107-113). Thus, after months of sending and resending bills to consumers in barrackstowns, the government finally granted the Belice earthquake victims exemption status for services provided by the state.

Overall, however, most actions of the protesters were ignored or refused by the government officials involved. The citizens' groups were frustrated by broken promises, closed doors, and the increasingly complex legal apparatus that failed to address the objectives set forth by the Belice citizens. They waited in vain for the government's stated objectives and pledges to be carried out. Typical was the reaction of high-level politicians to citizens' correspondence. In 1975 a priest organized a letter writing campaign from primary schools. Children wrote 700 Christmas letters to the Prime Minister (Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri) and other officials describing the conditions of barracks life and requesting the rapid provision of adequate housing. One little girl's pleas were dismissed in a re-routing back into the bureaucratic machinery when Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti responded to her with the following suggestion: don't write to me,

instead "ask the mayor of your village to write to me if there is something which I, as a minister and as a deputy, can do" (Ginsborg 1990: 346-47). Despite years of citizens' actions and a lively popular movement, the Prime Minister rebuffed this child, directing her to move through the established bureaucratic channels of the governmental labyrinth.

5. INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES: TRADE UNIONS AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Belice protesters were initially as hostile to the unions and leftist parties as they were to the state. At popular assemblies, the triumvirate of institutional power--the trade unions, political parties and central government--were condemned (all in absentia) by the citizens' groups. Between the protesters and the traditional Left there was a mutual distrust and reluctance to join forces. On one hand, some protesters may have felt largely ignored by leftist organizations before the earthquake and felt they could expect little more after. On the other hand, the new, spontaneous power base of citizens' committees and independent popular actions may have initially alarmed and alienated the leadership of these institutions.

Before the earthquake, whatever feeble representation there was for the poor, agricultural working class of western Sicily existed by virtue of some unions and left-leaning parties (Caldo 1974: 88-89). While it was expected

that these traditional leftist organizations would throw their support behind the protests of the Belice population, they in fact did just the opposite. At the start, unions and parties were certainly uninterested, if not hostile to the Belice movement. For instance, in 1970 their representatives failed to attend invitational conferences sponsored by citizens' groups, the study centers, and the Anti-Draft Committee. More antagonistic yet was the scheduling of a major union rally in Palermo on the very day of the March of the **mille** on Rome. This was viewed as an obvious attempt to prevent Belice workers from participating in the march (Barbera 1980a: 152-155).

While the trade unions did not get directly involved with the political mobilizations in the Belice, the popular movement coincided with a flurry of union activity in the area. Soon after the Belice actions of the National Appeal, the March on Rome, and the "hot summer" of 1968, the three major national unions (the Confederazione Generale del Lavoro, the Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Liberi, and the Unione Italiana Lavoratori) called for strikes in the cement industries, the marble quarries, and the agricultural zones of Western Sicily (**Giornale di Sicilia** 23, 26 January 1969 and 26 January 1969). Yet, there was always a marked distance between the trade unions and the Belice protesters. When the unions changed policy to support the movement in the early 1970s, they did so in terms of a rhetoric more aligned to national working-class

goals than to any particular objectives of the Belice population.

By 1970, regional offices of the national unions had rallied behind the citizens' calls for North-South parity, and drew parallels between the particular position of the earthquake victim and the general situation of the Southerner. In a union demonstration in Palermo, for example, participants claimed that the long delays in Belice reconstruction were neither unexpected or exceptional, but instead part of a continuing logic of underdevelopment by which the South was sacrificed for northern economic growth (*Giornale di Sicilia* 21 January 1970). In the same year the major unions in Palermo conflated the demands of the vocal Belice groups with the interests of all southern workers, namely, to end unemployment, underdevelopment, and emigration. While the unions phrased these demands as a challenge to the capitalist system, this particular phrasing was rarely, if ever, adopted by the citizens' groups themselves. Their goals, although politically radical, were always firmly rooted in the Belice situation.

Likewise, by the early 1970s there was a shift in the policy of political parties. The leftist factions of the Communist Party supported the collective movement in the Belice only after watching warily from the sidelines for the first three years of protest. Although delayed, support from this major oppositional party lent additional

legitimacy and strength to the movement if only for a limited time. With the collective mobilization and the backing of the Communist Party, the protesters believed their appeals and complaints stood a greater chance of being heard at the national level. Nevertheless, these ambitions were defeated in 1972 when the Communist Party leader, Enrico Berlinguer, negotiated with the central government dominated by Christian Democrats, trading in significant features of the progressive platform of the traditional Left for the privilege of participating in the national government (Ginsborg 1990: 354-8). Envisioned as an "Historic Compromise," parties of opposed, even antithetical ideologies were to share power in a coalition government. In essence, the Communists traded in the trust of their progressive constituents in order to achieve a representative role in national politics.¹⁶

Barbera draws a parallel between political developments in western Sicily in the early 1960s and the later Historic Compromise. A committee representing the four major parties was established to oversee economic development of the area. Little was done initially, and in the face of the earthquake and the subsequent citizens' mobilization, the attempt at coalition politics was

16. Scholars have pointed out that despite its being the largest communist party in the West, with one-third of the national vote, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) has been especially "conservative" in representing the interests of the working class and lower-middle class (Friedman 1987: 289).

dissolved. The failure of the political initiative may be viewed as an experiment poorly directed by the state (as Barbera [1980b] presents it), or as typical of political alliances in Sicily which are so often distorted by clientalism, competition, and corruption. Seven years later it was taken up again on the national level.

On the regional and local levels, the Communist Party took its direction from the national leadership and attempted to form alliances with the ruling Christian Democrats. Modeled on the Historic Compromise, the Christian Democrats in the Belice offered to cooperate with the Communists, but only on the condition that the Communists would first gain control over the citizens' movement (Barbera 1980b). This trade-off was arranged in the traditional manner of clientelistic politics; construction bids and building contracts were awarded to members of the Communist Party only when they renounced and repudiated the study centers and ended association with the popular assemblies and citizens' groups.¹⁷ Other more direct methods used to disrupt and disperse the protesters included violence and intimidation. Some of the leaders of the popular movement were harassed and encouraged to emigrate (Barbera 1980a: 179-83).

17. One informant, an architect who chose to work as a security guard, explained his disaffection with his original profession with reference to the moral compromises and ethical sacrifices made by his colleagues during this period.

When the Communist Party did participate in the popular protest, it did so more to rechannel discontent into manageable expressions than to support the actual objectives of the protesters. Caldo argues that the Socialists and Communists participated in the movement in order to prevent the mass-based groups from attaining electoral power independently (Caldo 1974: 97). Barbera argues that the Communists tried to deliberately dismantle the popular movement to maintain their own newly formed relationship to the Christian Democrats (Barbera 1980b). The means by which the Communist Party "supported" the movement--trading the promise of national representation for the repudiation of the spontaneous protest represented by the citizens' committees and the study centers--support this claim.

To the great disappointment of the politically active population, a new coalition of institutional powers--parties, unions, and state agencies--quickly replaced the independent, progressive, citizens' groups in the Belice. The politics of spontaneity and popular will were dismantled. Old patterns of local distrust of the state and party politics re-emerged and were reinforced, as responsibility for earthquake reconstruction was assumed by party functionaries, state bureaucrats, and big business concerns from the North. Disappointment and distrust were amplified by government scandals later in that same year

(1972).¹⁸ By this point the Belice population felt completely excluded from the process of rebuilding their towns, their hopes for a different kind of future dashed. Regarding the new circumstances around the reconstruction, an informant said:

The state was the thief, the state was the thief's victim, the state was the witness, and the state was the investigating commission. And the people? The people mustn't enter the scene because they are represented as the victim robbed by the state, as the witness of the state, and as the parliamentary commission itself. [quoted in Barbera 1980a: 179-80]

While it is true that union and party involvement provided the movement with access to external power sources, this involvement ultimately transformed the popular movement. Citizens' groups and the study centers lost control and the protest was redirected along lines dictated by the hierarchical, institutional forces of party and union. Thus, institutional representation was offered at the price of sacrificing local political organization and spontaneous popular expression.

For many of the Belice activists, hope for opposition had rested on Communist Party support. When the Party caved in to pressure from the conservative Christian Democrats rather than represent the popular will of the

18. For instance, there were investigations into corruption and the loss or theft of 600 billion lire earmarked for the reconstruction effort. No witnesses from the business or political community were willing to testify, and the case still awaited re-trial twelve years after the earthquake (Barbera 1980a: 177-183).

organized and determined earthquake victims, many protesters backed out altogether, with renewed cynicism and distrust of the state (Caldo 1974: 89-92; Renna 1979: 103; Barbera 1980b). An activist articulates this process of disillusionment well:

The popular movement wasn't assassinated by the mafia or the judges or the cops. He who cuts down the trees gets the house. The real assassin was the Communist Party. For me and many like me the Communist Party was life. We reasoned: I risk my bread and my skin to fight political corruption and the mafia, to smash it into pieces....But you, the Party which gave me breath and hope for so many years, spit at me with this Compromise and nail me to the cross like Christ himself. The Christian Democrat Party, the mother, daughter and mistress of all our nation's criminals, says to the Communist Party: "Do you want to screw with me? I am here with my thighs open waiting for you. But first you must kill off the power of the popular movement...." [Tanu Lu Cusciuto quoted in Barbera 1980a: 179]

The protesters of the Belice were not asking for a different distribution of resources between classes per se as much as the reorganization of regional inequality. Following the earthquake, there was widespread demand for development of the depressed economy of the South. The attempts at industrial poles in the Mezzogiorno during the 1960s had proved failures by 1968. The "cathedrals in the desert," capital-intensive petrochemical and steel plants, were neither integrated into the local economy nor able to compete successfully on the world market (Ginsborg 1990: 230, 331). The massive amount of state money (\$150 million by 1989 dollars) invested in economic development mostly by

the national agency for the South--the Fund for the Mezzogiorno (Cassa per il Mezzogiorno)--had done too little to actually alleviate the chronic economic insecurity felt by many western Sicilians (Hofmann 1990: 12; see also Carello 1989).

The Belice protesters wanted to be assured a significant productive role in the reconstruction of their towns. While this demand appears far from revolutionary, it does challenge a fundamental tension in the regional structure of capitalist development in Italy. Italy's economy benefited and continues to benefit from the North's use of the South as an internal colony (Gramsci 1971). That is to say, the Mezzogiorno provides a cheap and ready labor force for northern industry, and serves as a drainage area where extraneous and expendable workers can return during times of inflation, recession, and decreased labor demand. The protesters wanted to extricate themselves from this regional relationship of exploitation. The Belice citizens' groups stressed the need to hire local labor and local firms to reconstruct with local materials. Protesters more often oriented their objections and demands to the symptoms of uneven development rather than to the causes. They saw their own inclusion in productive relations as key to ending patterns of underdevelopment. Rather than the dismantling of the capitalist economic system, they sought a measure of control in its smooth operation in their towns.

In retrospect, the goals and objectives proposed by the Belice protesters indicated a desire on behalf of the people for fundamental changes in the whole structure of Italian political-economy. There were indeed radical implications underpinning their demands. If achieved, locally sustained economic development, for instance, would require real transformation of the national structure of regional inequality. Structural reorganization of the concentrations of industry, capital, and commerce in the North and agriculture, labor, and consumer markets in the South would be needed. To sustain productive economic growth in just the Belice Valley, in just the 14 most damaged towns, the provision of structural supports including nearby markets, accessible capital, and auxiliary industries would be essential.¹⁹ The reorganization of the region's economic structure was never achieved, nor was productive infrastructure provided.

Was it too daunting a task to generate economic productivity in the course of reconstruction? Were the already well-situated companies too interested in

19. The protestors' economic demands recall a larger debate in Italian political history. Echoing the fundamental disagreement between Lenin and Trotsky, the struggle for socialism in one city (e.g., Bologna) versus the struggle for socialism nationally or internationally, has been a perennial question regarding the role of Italy's north-central Red Belt. Can one worker, or city, or country, be free if another is enslaved? Rephrased in the Belice context, can one group of towns, linked together by a shared history of destruction and dependency on the state, transform the precarious economic situation and establish real economic growth in its region?

maintaining their exclusive control of the large and profitable market of earthquake reconstruction? To engage with and fulfill the demands of the protestors would have meant forfeiting the very big business of building the new towns with their new churches and stores, new offices and schools, new roads and bridges, new shopping centers and new houses, with new floor tiles, doorknobs, windows, and washbasins. In hindsight, evidence of major mafia collusion and a great number of contracts assigned to big northern companies does indeed indicate the formidable obstacle of entrenched and powerful interests confronting the Belize protestors in their goals for local and sustainable economic development.

A related obstacle, significant in blocking the real transformation of the Belize was powerful structure of hierarchy and privilege. The cross-class nature of the protest movement, although of short duration, presented unrecognizable alliances that confused and disrupted traditional political arrangements. Traditionally the distant state dealt with a small but powerful class of local intermediaries--a relationship which reduced the majority to political impotence. The primary objective of this cross-class protest movement, the democratic planning of reconstruction, would have entailed the reshuffling of decision-making responsibilities and thus, profoundly threatened the traditional hierarchies of power. If the new alliances had been permanently adopted and instituted

in a new structure of politics, the entrenched interests of mafia and elite intermediaries would have been forced to relinquish exclusive access to resources. But the profits to be made proved too attractive and the power structures of business and politics were too solidly entrenched to be supplanted by democratic decision-making and economic participation.

6. CONCLUSION

The Marxian geographer, Manuel Castells, offers a model of urban social movements that helps to assess the Belice protests and the government's response to disaster in Sicily. He argues that these movements are not about class struggle per se, not about labor appealing to capital for higher wages or better living conditions. Instead, urban social movements are political mobilizations organized on the basis of residence to appeal to or challenge the power of the state. There are three major themes common (in some combination) to all urban social movements. First, urban social movements involve popular demands regarding state-provided collective consumption. Secondly, there is frequently an attempt to defend a particular cultural identity of a group, defined by territory or political affiliation, against an identification imposed from without. Thirdly, urban social movements are politically oriented; although their demands may include social issues and economic changes, protesters

place priority on the claim of local political autonomy in the face of a strong, central state (Castells 1983: xvi).

Was the protest movement of earthquake victims in western Sicily an urban social movement according to the model set forth by Castells? The Belice movement does in fact square with Castells' model.

First, the protesters made specific demands regarding the state and its responsibility to earthquake victims. Indeed, there was a striking absence of oppositional rhetoric aimed at employers, even in the frequent protests against emigration and chronic unemployment. As the informal economy has always been important in semi-peripheral areas such as Sicily, the protests tended to be directed not to securing or increasing a wage income but instead to the "indirect or social wage represented by the urban services" (Walton 1981: 119-137). The state--in its provincial and national capacities--was the sole target of appeal and opposition. There was no debate regarding entitlement; from the moment the earthquake hit, the Belice population turned to the government to demand immediate assistance and assurance of long-term economic and social welfare.

The Belice population also forcefully asserted its cultural and political identity as a group isolated from and neglected by mainstream Italian society. The earthquake victims saw themselves subjected to larger forces, internal and external, that left their towns

physically destroyed, their area economically depressed, and their representatives politically impotent. They reacted by mobilizing a strong political movement, unified for the first time around a new identity. The "Belice," based on shared geography, residence in the barrackstowns, and political activism, served as the basis for the population to demand comprehensive reconstruction and economic development. Issues concerning the Belice reconstruction soon touched on the larger structural imbalances between North and South.

Local autonomy vis-à-vis the national government was another key issue. Belice protesters opposed the initial policy of demolition and emigration, and demanded a role in guiding state policies regarding reconstruction plans. Later, in the face of long delays by the state, popular protest was re-oriented to request full local control over the whole reconstruction process. While the state would provide financing, ideally town governments would be in charge of planning, zoning, and construction.²⁰ This meant a shift in the conceptualization of political power and its distribution. As Caldo points out, the new politics moved beyond the traditional party rivalries, to unite people in a struggle over issues specific to the Belice and not previously articulated by the political parties (Caldo

20. While never attained in the Belice, this organizational structure was used subsequently in the reconstruction of the Friuli region after the 1975 earthquake (Geipel 1982: 26).

1974: 97). Many of the Belice protesters viewed the aftermath of the earthquake as a long-awaited opportunity for political representation; they hoped it would take the form of local, autonomous, decision making assemblies that would democratically determine the course of reconstruction.

The democratic movement in the Belice appeared relatively successful in its early efforts to lobby the state for a reconstruction conjoined with economic development. By 1971, plans for the superhighway (**autostrada**) through the Belice were well underway. Agricultural processing plants and wineries were set up as cooperatives and reforestation projects were being established throughout the area. Many were employed and the collective movement still enjoyed popular support, despite attempts by entrenched interests (especially the mafia and landowning elite) to discredit and dismantle it. Besides the bombing of the barrack used by Barbera's Center, fires were intentionally set in barracks used for popular committee meetings and in the barrack-homes of some of the more active leaders of the citizens' movement (Barbera 1980a: 177). In addition, conservative priests used the pulpit in the attempt to discourage their parishioners from participation in the protest actions.

In view of the discouraging remarks by pundits about the capacity of Italians, and especially Sicilians, to organize political challenges, the Belice protests appear

not only singular in western Sicily, but anomalous in all of Italy as well. Ginsborg argues that the idea of citizen participation in politics was largely underdeveloped in Italy, in spite of the Belice protests and the national protest movements of the late 1960s and 1970s. The failure of the revolutionary movements is in his mind linked to the absence of political sophistication: "Vast sections of Italian society were impervious not only to revolutionary ideology, but even to modest political awareness" (Ginsborg 1990: 341). According to Lumley, the whole notion of an active citizenry was underdeveloped in Italy due to the lack of regular electoral politics (only two general elections were held before Mussolini took over in 1922), the failure of the government and the educational system to promote ideals of civic responsibility, and the poor integration of nationalist ideology during World War II (Lumley 1990: 11-13). Furthermore, in the South the particular characteristics of political structure and history, "clientelistic and criminal, and the fragmented nature of its society, made it far more likely that protest would find a right-wing rather than left-wing outlet" (Ginsborg 1990: 341).

It was extraordinary that lacking even the most basic resources, the poor and devastated Belice population came together against all odds to confront the powerful central state in a demand for direct democratic representation, political reform, and the comprehensive reconstruction of



residential and economic spheres of everyday life. In the course of organizing and engaging in the protest movement they challenged the status quo of politics and society. They took claim to spaces that, although "public" in name, had previously been out of reach, such as the chambers of the regional government in Palermo and the Italian Parliament in Rome. In the course of planning and attending conferences, they transformed the rural towns from locales of peasant residence and elite privilege into centers of widespread political expression and mobilization. In marching across the barren countryside, the Belice draft resisters transformed the landscape of animal husbandry, agriculture, and banditry into a landscape crossed with the path of struggle for self-determination and representation. The participants of the Belice movement envisioned and enacted a new relationship between space and society--one in which they could express their own objectives and plans in the structuring of their new houses and towns.

CHAPTER IV
"STONES MAKE PEOPLE DOCILE"
THEORETICAL QUESTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

1. INTRODUCTION

After the very long delays in response to the earthquake, the Italian state eventually refashioned much of the built environment of western Sicily. I take up specific questions of state intervention and the responses of the Belice citizenry in the following chapters. My concern here is to establish a theoretical perspective to examine the role of the state, particularly its political and economic objectives, in the reconstruction project.

In the course of repairing, building, and inhabiting new settlements after disasters a dynamic relationship emerges between people's expectations, their behavior and actions, and the built environment in which they lived and continue to live. Because the relationship between the built environment and the social, economic, and political manifestations of human behavior is dialectical, its study calls for an interactive, processual approach. Examination of the relationship between government policy-making and the inhabitants in the Belice Valley requires a dynamic model; from such a model we can also speculate on the larger relationship between the built environment and human action.

The inclusion of space and geography as active components in social process is a relatively recent endeavor in social science. The emphasis on time and history at the expense of space and the built environment has characterized much social analysis, despite repeated calls for holistic perspectives. David Harvey best explains this deficit in theoretical understanding. He argues that: "The issue of space and geography is a sadly neglected stepchild in all social theory" (Harvey 1985a: 141). This omission has been due primarily to the way important social theorists--Marx, Durkheim, and Weber--viewed space and geography "unproblematically as the stable context or site for historical action" (Harvey 1985a: 141). While Marx recognized the propensity of capitalism to perpetually strive "to overcome all spatial barriers and annihilate space with time," he was nonetheless more apt to view spatial difference as an "unnecessary complication" in the analysis of class and historical transformation (in Harvey 1985a: 145, 143; Marx 1973: 539). In fact, Harvey finds Marx's "political vision and his theory ... undermined by his failure to build a systematic and distinctively geographical and spatial dimension into his thought" (Harvey 1985a: 143). Important historical episodes demonstrate the danger in this oversight. Nearly all the necessary changes of modern capitalist development have included a significant spatial component: colonialism and imperialism, the investment of surplus capital abroad,

capital developments in technology to cross space such as railroads, highways, and communications networks, and the ability of multinationals to "command space" in their race across the geographical landscape in search of consumer markets and cheap labor (Harvey 1985a: 142).

Despite the central importance of space in the historical trajectories of capitalism, however, the focus on the built environment and geography has been minimal. Gregory and Urry suggest that in Britain prior to the work of Anthony Giddens in the 1970s and 1980s, space was seen as peripheral or even "flatly condemned as an irrelevant distraction" (Gregory and Urry 1985: 3). Giddens' theory of structuration provided the theoretical wherewithall to approach the influence of space on social action. In this view, the spatial structures of political and social life have primary importance in the general processes of historical change (see Giddens 1979).

Manuel Castells also stresses the importance of locating space in the center of social analysis. He says that all "theories of space...are theories of society" and that "space, like time,...is the articulation of concrete historical practices" (Castells 1977: 442, 443). As a result of the tenacious insistence and exemplary scholarship of Harvey, Giddens, Castells and others, space and the built environment have recently been included in social analysis in Europe and the United States. Many now accept the maxim, "the division between 'spatial process'

and 'social process' is arbitrary: they are both different sides of the reality we seek to understand" (Pinch 1985: 169). In other words, "There is no a-spatial society and no a-social space" (Markus 1993: 13).

In this chapter I address theoretical literature on the subject in order to inform and develop expectations regarding linkages between the built environment and relationships of class and power. I focus first on the built environment as it can influence and reflect political considerations and economic processes. I investigate the field of urban planning as an important vehicle in the expression of state power. Because Modernism shaped much urban planning thought and practice in this century, an overview of Modernist trends in architecture and design closes this section. These theoretical contributions orient the anthropological perspectives on culture, power, and the built environment assumed in following chapters.

2. STATE INTERVENTION

Recent scholarship in Marxian social theory, particularly the work of Manuel Castells, David Harvey, and Michel Foucault, addresses the built environment by integrating issues of spatial transformation with considerations of political control and competition over economic resources. These perspectives on geography and the built environment are particularly useful because 1) they grant primacy to relationships of power and

inequality, 2) they integrate the systems of production, distribution, consumption into a single analytic framework and, 3) they use processual models that explicitly recognize the dynamic relationship between space and human action.

The underlying objectives guiding state policy are linked most fundamentally to the distribution of power. Particularly under capitalism, the state generates conditions to maintain and increase its own power. Government policy is aimed to reduce social conflict and control class tensions. Furthermore, the state in modern capitalism has increasingly interceded on behalf of capitalist interests to motivate economic growth and stability. Increasing political and economic control over the daily life of the populace is a means by which these goals are achieved (Harvey 1981: 103, 114).

I first discuss Harvey's perspectives on the economic processes by which the state and capital influence the built environment to ensure the continuing profit and formation of capital. I then use Castells' analysis of the politics of urban society to demonstrate how economic and political considerations converge in the domination of the capitalist state over the built environment. Foucault's argument regarding the role of space in disciplining a subject population brings these perspectives to the level of individual experience and action.

Harvey examines underlying relations of power to explain the process of transformation of the built environment with an emphasis on economic process. The built environment encompasses the spaces in which production and consumption occur. This space is not merely a given location but a construction reflecting and influencing human agency. Most simply: "Investment in the built environment...entails the creation of a whole physical landscape for purposes of production, circulation, exchange, and consumption" (Harvey 1985a: 96). Structural transformations of society and politics involve continuous changes in the built environment.

While people inhabiting space tend to take it for granted, there is the systemic requirement in capitalism to continually transform the built environment. The "spatial fix" is an ever-present feature of capitalism. Harvey gives contour to Lefebvre's claim that "the urban system can be understood as the genesis of capital" (in Guarrasi 1981: 20-21). According to Harvey, capitalism survives "only by occupying space, only by producing space" (Harvey 1985b: 26). This requirement is linked directly to the process of circulation. To avoid the tendency toward overaccumulation and the devaluation of capital and labor associated with it, outlets are needed to absorb surplus capital and labor reserves.¹ Large-scale intervention in

1. These outlets occur as different circuits of capital (primary, secondary, and tertiary with short, medium and long-term returns), operating in geographically distinct

urban development is seen as a means to resolve these periodic crises of overaccumulation (Harvey 1985a). Different factions of corporate capital invest in the built environment--particularly in infrastructure, consumption goods and services--when it is no longer profitable to invest in the primary circuit of production. Thus, the built environment becomes a sort of "dumping ground" for reserves of capital resources (Harvey 1985c: 168).

The role of the state is ever more important in the development and circulation of capital. Government-financed infrastructure and state subsidies to increase housing availability shore up this process. The postwar capitalist state has increasingly assumed the role of investor in the construction of social and physical infrastructures. This form of investment into goods for collective consumption (highways, public buildings, housing, sports complexes) links two requisite processes: it absorbs surpluses of capital and labor and it subsidizes the costs associated with consumption and social reproduction. This takes a heavy financial burden off the shoulders of capital; there is less of a need for employers to balance the workers' wages with the full costs of workers' social reproduction. Whereas these costs are prohibitively large, long-term, and constraining for individual capitalists, the state by contrast has the

areas (First, Second, and Third Worlds; Core, Semi-Periphery, and Periphery) (Harvey 1981).

wherewithall to invest in infrastructural projects and subsidize consumption by virtue of its control over the money supply and its regulation of the credit system (Harvey 1981: 97; 1985a: 148). Government involvement with the production and management of the built environment assumes a measure of legitimacy in its representation as public good over private gain and as public control over the potential abuses of power by private developers (Harvey 1985c: 174).

In short, the smooth circulation of capital requires the continual replacement of natural landscapes with built environments, and the previous built environments with new ones--a process that necessitates commodification, investment, destruction of existing landscapes, construction of built forms, and continually changing property values (Harvey 1973; 1981). Premature obsolescence is an essential component of this process, always requiring new investment in construction, destruction, and reconstruction. Each stage of new investment yields increased surplus and profit and thus generates the conditions necessary for the next transformation. From capital's perspective, the turnover speed for each new phase should increase. The state on the other hand, is not as worried about turn-over time; control of the financial system allows it to extend more credit when necessary.

As such, the built environment evolves continually, always perpetuating the circulation of capital through the economy, always reaching out to include more areas (over and over again) in this process (Harvey 1985b: 27-28). Thus, while profitability in earlier phases of capitalism rested on the incremental increase in the capture of labor time and productivity, profitability in contemporary capitalism relies on the changing built environment as a means to absorb capital and subsidize consumption needs. Harvey sums up this condition at the heart of modern capitalism: "the rush of human beings across space is now matched by an accelerating pace of change in the produced landscapes across which they rush" (Harvey 1985b: 28).

These processes of capital investment into the built environment have large-scale geographical consequences. Based on the perspectives of Harvey, John Urry (1985) argues that in advanced capitalist areas such as North America and Western Europe, a growing spatial division between capital processes of production and the reproduction of labor power has emerged.² Areas are increasingly specialized to produce either capital or labor. In the case of capital and the production of commodities, profitability depends on mobility. Capital is and must be "hypermobile": it has "no need for spatial

2. Urry points out that Marx left largely unfinished the analysis social reproduction (Urry 1985: 33). Radical feminists of the 1970s first introduced the topic and justified its importance in social theory (e.g. Dalla Costa and James 1972).

proximity nor indeed for any particular spatial location" (Urry 1985: 33). Capital rushes through areas, developing circuits of primary production, earning profits while wearing down or depleting factors of production then moving on to new areas. Increasingly, the apparatus of production is made of component parts, easily dismantled, easily transported, easily re-established.³ Towns and cities are left behind, productive laborers lose their jobs and factories, stores and houses are abandoned in what is by now a common phenomenon of economic suffocation. (See for example the scholarly discussion regarding the Rustbelt areas of the United States [Tabb and Sawers 1984].)

The reproduction of labor power, by contrast, occurs within civil society; it is a process not so easily dismantled or moved. Instead, civil society is "necessarily spatially located and constrained and attachment to 'place' is of particular significance" (Urry 1985: 33). While workers can move from place to place following jobs as migrants, the communities in which they are born and raised are necessarily more permanent. Social reproduction implies large-scale investment into infrastructure and public services, the construction of housing and public institutions. It involves the creation of communities and historical continuity.

3. Christopher Chase-Dunn was one of the first to discuss this process with empirical case studies (1982).

Patterns of capital investment and disinvestment in the built environment has important consequences at the level of the community:

Previously such localities were integrated within the production and reproduction of capital. However, as each urban locality has been reduced to the status of a labour pool so they are now integrated not within the production process of capital but of wage-labour, within the spheres of civil society rather than of capitalist production per se. [Urry 1985: 35]

Local and international capital are detached and disconnected; international capital investment is directed towards large-scale production and profit while local investment targets consumption. Regions and communities become more exclusively areas for social reproduction. Changes in the dynamics of social life follow. Class is no longer determined by one's relationship to production; class differences within a community are thus less pronounced since that which defined them--production--has been removed or reduced in contemporary communities of consumption and social reproduction. Another consequence of the spatial separation of production from consumption is the increased competition between these diminished communities of consumption. In the struggle to attract jobs, different towns try to express their distinctiveness, their "respective merits as a pool of wage labor" vis-à-vis other similar communities (Urry 1985: 36). As a result, regions and communities become hierarchically specialized

and stratified in their attempts to lure increasingly transient capital investments.

The increasing influence of the state upon the processes of social reproduction has been significant in the specialization and distinctiveness of communities of consumption. In an important work, **The Urban Question** (1977), Castells describes the role of the capitalist state in provisioning urban services associated with social reproduction. Castells first locates the symbiotic relationship between private capital and the government. Like Foucault and Harvey, he argues that the government increases its power over the citizenry by increasing its intervention in the domestic life of its subjects. By providing collectivized services for consumption--some portion of education, health and welfare, and housing--the state facilitates the profit-making capabilities of private capital. While subsidizing costs otherwise shouldered by employers, state intervention into collective consumption can serve to create a more content and passive citizenry prepared to absorb the products of capitalist enterprise. People with access to housing, affordable transportation, and adequate health care for instance, are less likely to agitate for political change or the redistribution of income, despite the fact that citizens increasingly pay for consumption costs (see also Harvey 1985c: 179).

Related to this, the collectivized provision of goods and services can protect and insulate private capital from

political opposition. As the government takes on an ever larger role in consumption, complaints regarding inadequate provisioning are directed to the state, not capital. Opposition and dissatisfaction are voiced in terms of citizens' requirements rather than workers' demands. Organized protest in the form of urban social movements develops around consumption demands, which the government can redress by increasing either its provisionary role or its oppressive apparatus.⁴ Whether providing consumption goods to relieve private capital from an expensive financial burden or to rechannel political opposition, the state, for Castells as for Harvey, is essential to the protection and perpetuation of capital's interests.

The most significant means of state intervention into social reproduction involves the regulation and provision of housing. State-provided housing, for example, places people in a dependency relationship with the government, usually in terms of financial debt. Housing can domesticate an otherwise propertyless, transient population by controlling population movements, encouraging savings, and giving inhabitants a stake in the system. Protest and opposition become less likely when housing, an expensive and relatively permanent investment, is on the line.

4. Both options involve an increased cost of governing. O'Conner (1973) points out that unless taxation is increased to balance out these demands, government financing falters, resulting in a fiscal crisis of the state. Increased taxation can be seen by citizens as the state accepting responsibility for the social fund and acquiescing to demands regarding consumption issues.

Owner-occupied housing also generates economic activity by increasing commercial exchange and investments in home improvement and the purchase of consumption goods.

The state further intervenes in the daily life of its citizenry with the location and design of subsidized housing. Building codes and zoning influence both the public and the private housing market, determining features of structure, size, and design. Housing location and design can serve to facilitate or inhibit kinds of political association, patterns of production and consumption, relations between different classes, as well as those between men and women. The composition of families and households and the social evaluations of residents within the community are also affected by features of placement and style of housing. The size, the spatial relations between houses, the style of housing, the divisions within the house itself, the arrangements of interiors and exteriors, all shape the ways in which people inhabit their residential space.

Environmental transformation is influenced by more than the conscious intentions of inhabitants and the state. There is an important ideological component in the use and transformation of the built environment, which accounts for the tendency to take for granted the space one inhabits. Harvey says the built environment, like time and money, is a "concrete abstraction"; all three are "so deeply entrenched that they appear almost as facts of nature"

(Harvey 1985b: 24).⁵ Castells also recognizes this unconscious taken-for-grantedness of space. He contends the "cultural meaning" of space is "'spontaneously' internalized in the social behavior of all social groups" (Castells 1983: 14). This taken-for-grantedness of the built environment is precisely what makes it so effective as a vehicle of influence and domination.

Foucault discusses the state's control over the environment as it affects the very nature of the individual and his or her relation to society. The state in modern capitalism, according to Foucault, controls space in order to establish a "disciplinary regime" to better dominate and manage its citizenry (Foucault 1977). His model--immensely powerful and terrifying at the same time--is grounded in history, demonstrating the changing nature of the individual in different periods of Europe's past. He argues that during feudalism, privilege was exclusive and concentrated in few individuals who enjoyed legitimacy and high status by virtue of blood and rank. Their power was marked by ceremony and genealogy, and they were recognized as individual leaders at the top of a teeming mass of undifferentiated inferiors. By contrast, inferiors in

5. The full quotation is: "Prices, movements of the clock, rights to clearly marked spaces, form the frameworks within which we operate and to whose signals and significations we perforce respond as powers external to our individual consciousness and will. And no matter how fiercely the spirit of revulsion and revolt may occasionally flare, the tight norms defined by such concrete abstractions are by now so deeply entrenched that they appear almost as facts of nature" (Harvey 1985b: 24).

contemporary society are individualized. They are marked by documentation, registration, and surveillance; the masses are differentiated individuals subject to the exercise of state power by means of bureaucratic regulation and administration (Foucault 1977: 193). The more vulnerable one is to identification, to isolation as an individual, the more subject one is to exposure and the less power one has in the modern world.⁶ On the other hand, contemporary powerholders are less visible. Their privileged access to privacy protects them, their wealth and power, from scrutiny by the majority and their claims to equality.

Disciplinary society has as its objective the ever increasing control over its subjects by the convenient and self-perpetuating mechanisms of hierarchical observation, normalization, and examination (Foucault 1977: 170-194). These mechanisms are established in the course of increasing state control over space--especially over settlement and architecture. There is an additional twist in Foucault's understanding of disciplinary society: with the planned and intentional use of settlement and architecture, individual subjects are not only discouraged

6. For an easy example one needs only think of public assistance to mothers giving birth in contemporary United States. Government workers are permitted (required) to enter the home of the mother and child after the birth to assist (survey) the situation. By contrast, homes of women with adequate means to fully pay for delivery are not visited by state employees except under extraordinary circumstances.

from opposition and rebellion, but indeed assist those in power by exposing and surveying themselves. In the same way that the space of incarceration, the panopticon prison, perpetuates self-monitoring and discipline of the prisoners, the design of the modern urban form, the "punitive city," perpetuates the self-monitoring and discipline of citizens (Foucault 1977:113). It is in the state's interest to set up an

architecture that would operate to transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them. Stones can make people docile and knowable. The old simple schema of confinement and enclosure--thick walls, a heavy gate that prevents entering or leaving--began to be replaced by the calculations of openings, of filled and empty spaces, passages and transparencies. [Foucault 1977: 172]

To Foucault, Castells, and Harvey, then, the built environment represents a convenient, effective, and often well disguised mechanism to facilitate capital circulation, increase state power, and perpetrate the self-control and subordination of individuals. In these models, facets of state influence and control over the built environment are smoothly integrated. In the course of resolving economic crisis, capital is invested to generate profit in real estate values, new jobs are established to further incorporate the population, and new consumer demands are created to facilitate the expansion of commercial markets. Construction of the built environment serves to absorb surplus capital and employ a large proportion of the labor

force; as such, it promotes capitalist profits and facilitates state control over workers.

Furthermore, political discontent is less likely to galvanize a population distracted by home ownership and mortgage debt. Importantly, by providing consumption goods and services collectively, the state gains ideological legitimacy in the eyes of the population. Expectations that capital (represented by employers) is responsible for the costs associated with the reproduction of the labor force are diminished or disappear altogether. Social reproduction becomes a cost shouldered by all taxpayers and regulated by an increasingly powerful state. In areas suffering huge disinvestment and capital flight, citizens (often unemployed workers) have been willing to utilize their taxes to entice investment in production locally with massive subsidies and tax breaks.

There is a significant irony in this new legitimacy of the government. As Foucault reminds us, the construction of an environment that constitutes part of the disciplinary machinery of the state is especially valuable (and thus prevalent) in capitalism. When the design of space perpetuates hierarchical organization, observation, and self-surveillance, there is less need for the state to actively monitor and regulate the population. As a result of subsidizing infrastructure, capital investment, and the spatial environment of consumption, taxpayers end up paying both for exploitative jobs and for the machinery of

disciplinary technology that unobtrusively manipulates them.

3. THE STATE AND URBAN PLANNING

Urban planning, represented as a scientific discipline, addresses the state's needs for social engineering. It allows the state to regulate the shape and structure of the environment, the form and movement of people's social interaction, the patterns of their work and consumption, and the routines of their personal lives.

Early urban planning can be characterized by a variety of contradictory and complementary objectives associated with the rise of social work and welfare. Most generally, urban planning represents the attempt to engineer society by intervening in the built environment and providing services on a collective basis. As an incipient means of regulation and intervention into the lives of the poor, urban planning can be viewed both as an altruistic attempt to help alleviate conditions associated with poverty and as a straightforward approach to problems associated with disorderly building and chaotic arrangements of infrastructure. Urban planning can also be viewed as an administrative means to address the concerns of one class over those of another--for instance as a means to control dangers feared by the bourgeoisie in early modern cities, posed by the threat of infectious disease, crime, or rebellion presented by the poor.

Since the early and limited experiments of factory towns⁷ and colonial cities,⁸ capitalist nation states have refined and expanded the purposes and methods of urban planning to encompass politics, economics, and social science. As a means of social control both abroad and at home, the design and construction of the built environment has served as an effective and profitable means of enriching capital interests while maintaining social control over resident populations. Starting in the 19th century, urban planning can be characterized as a form and expression of power associated with and particularly well-suited to the capitalist nation state.

The ideological legitimacy for urban planning rests on the notion of balancing the community's social ideals with those of private economic interests. On the surface, this appears as a relatively antiseptic and clear-cut process of the state management of space and time, yet, this

7. The more notable examples of factory cities in the United States included those of the Connecticut River Valley; in France the Saltworks at Chaux and Godin's Fourieresque **familistere** experiment in Guise stand out (Schuman 1991).

8. The extraordinary experiments of colonial cities built and inhabited during early industrialism and colonial expansion serve as examples of top-down control over urban life (Ross and Telkamp 1985). For instance, the design and construction of New Delhi or the new section of Algiers by the English and French colonizers respectively, exemplify two of the more obvious top-down efforts to impose colonial control over markets and populations (King 1976; Rabinow 1989). The use of urban planning in the exercise of colonial authority encompasses much urban development throughout the Third World. Janet Abu-Lughod's (1980) study of Rabat illustrates well the internal workings of such a city.

understanding strays from the reality of the process. Foucault, Harvey, and Castells urge us to see that planning is more accurately understood as a complex tool in the expression of control and domination, used to achieve the economic and political objectives considered in the previous section. The rise of planning in this last century represents the state's thorough attempt to multiply its power and generate profit for monied interests by means of organized control over urban development. As political practice, urban planning involves the ever more pervasive exertion of state power to homogenize cultural differences, to obstruct oppositional politics, and to increase the government's knowledge and surveillance of local-level opinions and actions. As an economic strategy, urban planning provides the state with the means to intervene and manage the different capital markets of real estate, infrastructure, labor, and domestic consumption.

There is tension built into the relationship between capital and the state in its role as director and financier of urban planning. While "capitalists cannot realize their collective interests in the organization of the built environment without the direction of planners," there is necessarily a conflict of interests as the state intervenes in the realm of private property (Fogelson 1986: 248). Thus, in discussing private capital it must be recognized that different factions compete as antagonists over the forms and nature of state intervention. For instance,

while manufacturing capital may want housing estates built at taxpayers' expense to lessen the wage requirements for its workforce, real estate capital may oppose the expropriation of land for the housing. On the other hand, real estate interests may support mortgage subsidies that generate market activity in housing, while commercial capital might want government economic policy to generate more spending on other consumer goods.

The field of urban planning finds itself not only caught negotiating between different factions of capital with competing interests in the built environment, but also between users of the built environment represented by the consuming working classes. While capital generally approaches the built environment as a vehicle to promote circulation, production, and exchange by means of markets for construction, consumption, and real estate, labor on the other hand "looks to the built environment as a means of consumption and as a means for its own reproduction and, perhaps, expansion" (Harvey 1985c: 168). Internally differentiated by ethnicity and status criteria, groups within the working class struggle against each other in competition for housing and access to other public resources.

Despite the top-down nature of planning, the built environment is never solely a reflection of state intentions. Most significantly, the expression of state objectives and the interests of competing capital factions

can be complicated by the goals, reactions and intentions of the inhabitants that live in planned spaces. Citizens' organizations can facilitate or act as obstacles to the state goals and projects. Individuals and families can subvert the ideals of architects, consciously and unconsciously, in the course of inhabiting and changing the planned spaces. It is important to note that inhabitants do in fact influence and shape their environments, whether or not they have been granted any formal role or responsibilities to do so.

In short, attempts to control the environment through urban planning in no way guarantee the expression of either monolithic capital interests or dominating state will. The negotiations between different groups involved in state-sponsored urban planning projects are interactive--best seen as expressions of conflict and contestation. In analyzing the government's role in planning, it is important to view the state as more than a mere instrument for capital's bidding. Instead, it is the locus of struggle between competing factions of economic and political elites, of state bureaucrats and subject citizens, factions that sometimes overlap and other times clash.

4. MODERNISM AND PLANNING

Modernism, as an ideology and a style, dominated the urban planning profession throughout much of the 20th

century; as such its study illuminates the power-laden relationship between the state, planners, and architects as they have shaped and regulated the built environment. The Modernist project, as first conceptualized by Le Corbusier, specified the use of architecture for clearly defined objectives. It was first of all the vehicle of change needed to transform both space **and** people. The old city was seen as the "donkey city," with old houses fit only for "wretched animals" (Le Corbusier 1926: 18); traditional architecture was defined as "stifling" (Le Corbusier 1926: 86). Zukin states:

With modernism, 'old' was rarely 'better.' The tortured viability of older landscapes was viewed as an irritant, or a stimulant to an additional and ultimately homogenizing round of structural changes.
[Zukin 1991: 17]

Instead, Modernist architecture and planning were to be at once "totalizing" and "transformative" (Besset 1976: 72; Le Corbusier 1926: 19). The central importance of planning and architecture was self-evident: "architecture in all things; town planning in all things" (Le Corbusier in Besset 1976: 149). It is precisely through planning and architecture that the Machine Age would be able to imprint itself on the historical record (Besset 1976: 72).

The Athens Charter of 1943 clearly demonstrates Le Corbusier's views on town planning and society. Although Mies van der Rohe said "the battle for new housing is only one aspect of the great fight for new forms of life," Le

Corbusier focused on the house as the primary element in transforming the individual and society (van der Rohe in Besset 1976: 91). He opened the Athens Charter with the topics of housing, administration, and traffic: people live in houses, sealed away above the bustle of movement of people and machines; a government is needed to administer them, and so government buildings are constructed; the movement between homes and public offices requires a rationalization of circulation and traffic (Le Corbusier 1943). Work and social life were addressed almost as afterthoughts. With an implicit separation between production and consumption, the former was largely ignored in the Modernist project.

Modernism had as its goal "the transformation of society, both in its taste and social make-up" (Jencks 1986: 31-32). Modernists looked to industrialism in search of technical solutions to social problems (Jencks 1986: 18; Trabalzi 1991: 137). In terms of design, the emphasis in the past on historical referent and decorative elaboration was replaced with a new reliance on "structure, circulation, open space, industrial detailing, and abstraction" (Jencks 1986: 36). To overcome the conditions of dirt, congestion, and overcrowding associated with the old city, Modernist planning and building was to bring about order, with the idea that "where order reigns, well-being begins" (Le Corbusier 1926: 52). Thus, while the peasant may have loved his decorated house in his donkey

city, in planning the Modernist city, a "modern man" with a "mechanical sense" led the way (Le Corbusier 1926: 133, 119).

Modernist architectural style and composition is both pedantic and consistent. The city was to be open and airy, stream lined and of uniform style (Le Corbusier 1926: 86; Trabalzi 1991: 140-143). Standardized design was enthusiastically embraced because of its economic rationality and social uniformity (Le Corbusier 1926: 138). Rejecting promiscuity of function, streets were designed for cars alone, inhibiting use as spaces for public interchange or work. Pedestrians, it seems, were nothing if not disorderly. Cafes and **piazze** and all the social activity generated around them were seen as the "fungus which eats up the pavements" (Le Corbusier 1926: 58).

Le Corbusier claimed the house would be mass-produced and ultimately change the "spirit" of the resident (Le Corbusier 1926: 11-13). Technology of house design in Modernism provided for increased privacy; functions that were once fulfilled in the publicly shared spaces of the donkey city were in Le Corbusier's Modernist city fulfilled in the house and its exclusive extensions. The house became both a "machine for living" and the central unit around which the city evolved (Besset 1976: 91, 166). As such, it "inevitably imposes discipline on the inhabitants" (Le Corbusier 1926: 225). In other words (of critics), the house reflected the larger project of the Modernist

movement; it was an expression of an "alienating social regimentation" on the most immediate level (e.g., Crawford 1991: 38).

Characteristic architectural features of the Modernist house include elevation, roof-gardens, ribbon windows, free facade, and free plan (Besset 1976). Elevation involves locating the living space one floor above, resting high above the ground floor on columns (**pilotis**). This vertical segregation of space "provides the means to resolve the greatest illness of the old cities" (Le Corbusier in Boesinger 1972: 31). The ground level becomes functionally reserved for circulation of people through the city (in automobiles), while domestic life remains in suspended distance. Boundaries between public, semi-public, and private are no longer messy nor subject to continual negotiations and renegotiations. The shared alleyway, courtyard, or **piazza** of old is replaced by the roof-top garden, an "extension of living quarters" for the individual family (Le Corbusier in Besset 1976: 150).

Domestic life is made visible through ribbon windows. "The plan proceeds from within to without; the exterior is the result of the interior" (Le Corbusier 1960: 11). Stylistically the facade of the Modernist building is subsumed by the interior, theoretically indistinguishable from the back of the house (Gregotti 1968: 10).

The interior takes shape from Le Corbusier's idea of "existenz-minimum," or minimal existence (Le Corbusier

1926). The "existenz-minimum is not based on the amount of space necessary for each resident but rather on the minimum number of rooms necessary to constitute an apartment" (Trabalzi 1991: 143). Thus, interiors were not designed to accommodate inhabitants with specific patterns of behavior and different lifestyles associated with class, ethnicity, work, or gender. In fact, particularities of place are "trivialized," "ignored" and "repressed...in this notion of modern life" (Zukin 1991: 12). Instead, residence of the "generic masses" was to unfold in similar ways within standardized spaces (Crawford 1991: 44). In short, in its design the house was idealized at the expense of social requirements and realities (Trabalzi 1991). People would be made to fit this house, rather than the house being made to fit the people.

The Modernist project leads us to ask: is the designer of space all powerful? Are the architect and planner responsible for the objectives and rationale behind spatial design? Many do see architecture and planning as a conceit linked to elitism and authority. In the ModerORT\dfind clear articulation of just such a perspective. "Men--intelligent, cold, and calm--are needed to build the house and to lay out the town" (Le Corbusier 1926: 119). Planners are seen by Le Corbusier as the "chosen few" destined to "lead" in designing the space

of life for others (Le Corbusier 1926: 96).⁹ Others have suggested that the architect and planner should grasp this role, using his elevated position to "impose his knowledge, humanism, and universality on the administrators, politicians, and bankers" (Hodgkinson in Schuman 1991: 246). Ledoux mused, after designing the worker-community Saltworks, also in France: "Is there anything unknown to the architect, he who is as old as the sun?" (Ledoux in Schuman 1991: 246).

When designing the built environment it is necessary for the central figure of planner-architect to first "intervene in the production of this complex composite commodity and to ensure its proper management and maintenance" (Harvey 1985c: 165). Control over the built environment implies a powerful influence over production for capital and residence for workers. Harvey says of the power embedded in the planning process:

9. This insinuates the high-culture/low-culture debate in architecture. Some social theorists (Gans 1968) contend that social opposition can be expressed materially in terms of house style and design, while others argue that opposition of this sort is ineffectual (Crawford 1991: 39). More important in terms of contemporary architecture, especially in the United States, is the growing gap between what is considered non-architecture--the design of shopping malls and mass housing, the space of everyday life for the masses--and an architecture of formalism--the expression of corporate capital and leisure for the elite (Ghirardo 1991). There is a growing "hierarchy of taste that excludes more than it includes" (Ghirardo 1991: 11). With little exaggeration, Andres Duany said that there is more time and enthusiasm dedicated to designing the doorknob of a fancy house than to designing all the low-cost suburban housing in the United States (in Ghirardo 1991: 14).

The power to shape space then appears as one of the crucial powers of control over social reproduction. And it is exactly on this basis that those who have professional and intellectual skills to shape space materially and effectively--engineers, architects, planners, and so on--can themselves acquire a certain power and convert their specialized knowledge into financial benefit. [Harvey 1985b: 23]

According to Foucault, urban planning has become part of the "great carceral continuum that diffused penitentiary techniques into the most innocent disciplines" (Foucault 1977: 297). Institutional personnel, in the most inclusive sense, have become "technicians of behavior," skilled in the "art of power relations" (Foucault 1977: 294, 295). These teachers, prison guards, and urban planners are responsible for ensuring disciplinary supervision throughout society.

Claims like these certainly lend credence to a view of architecture and planning as a combination of elitism and authority. But is the architect-planner simply the "handmaiden of a coercive, dominant power," as many critics would have us believe (Trabalzi 1991: 150)? Is the process of designing the built environment merely an "architecture from high conceded to lower classes"? (Trabalzi 1991: 148). Does planning and architecture imply arrogant conceit, altruistic devotion, or some of both? And, finally, do the objectives and methods used by the planner for the state necessarily achieve their intended results? Some philosophers of spatial process give us a richer and more complex analysis of urban planning.

5. PLANNERS: WHO ARE THEY? WHAT DO THEY WANT TO DO?

The nature of urban planning is admittedly complex. Harvey approaches the issue in terms of politics and negotiation. For instance, planners act to represent and reconcile the needs of competing groups--workers and capital--and "harmonize" relations between them. "The role of the planner, then, ultimately derives its justification and legitimacy from intervening to restore that balance which perpetuates the existing social order" (Harvey 1985c: 177). Thus, the planner, because she or he is working to achieve harmony and maintain the status quo within a system and as part of a system that perpetuates class conflict and crisis, is caught in a position fraught with contradiction and frustration (Harvey 1985c: 181).

At the same time, neither architects nor planners are in full control of the built environment, but fall under direct authority of the state (and, indirectly, capital) (Crawford 1991). Planners are especially dependent on the government for their professional training (there are no urban planning departments outside of the public university system in Italy, for example) and for their employment (town planning is generally too expensive and too large a project for private enterprise to undertake). Despite interdependency between state and planners, the relationship is not as clear as it may appear. While the state may have an interest in using the built environment

to influence and manipulate people, planners are not merely messengers and mediators of this interest.

Significantly, identification of the client has presented confusion in the planning process. The indirect relationship between the designer, the purchaser, and the user can derail design and complicate the smooth implementation of urban plans. The purchasers are both the state through redistribution and the inhabitant through taxes. The beneficiaries are both the inhabitant, who uses the space for social reproduction, and the state, who uses the space to fulfill economic and political objectives. The role of the planner is therefore somewhat oblique, operating from a position of "ethical disinterest" in this nexus (Crawford 1991: 32). This complexity allows planners to perceive the inhabitant and not the state as the client; in this way they see themselves in a neutral position vis-à-vis the government (Crawford 1991: 43).

Yet, this neutrality is unrealistic for various reasons. First, one is rarely liberated of one's own class interests and cultural background, especially in the design of housing. While planners and architects may have learned to penetrate the taken-for-grantedness of the built environment in the course of their professional education, the house is loaded with class and cultural presuppositions. A more relativistic approach, for example, might see architects and planners as active participants in the culture in which they live. Architects

express and behave within their own class and cultural paradigms--which, although they may be unconsciously held, are anything but neutral. In designing towns and houses, one might facilitate and perpetuate the power of the state over its subject citizenry as a result of expressing one's own class biases in housing, rather than as a conscious effort to manipulate people through a specific design.

Pierre Bourdieu's notion of culture or habitus (action generated by unconscious rules) and codified rules helps us to understand the complicated role of the planner. Cultural rules are formulated and adopted by those who benefit from them in order to satisfy self-interest and ethical prestige (Bourdieu 1977: 22-29). But the common or regular expression of patterned cultural behavior is not a "product of a consciously laid-down and consciously respected ruling." Instead, "the rule's last trick is to cause it to be forgotten that agents have an interest in obeying the rule" (Bourdieu 1977: 22). Planners and architects can make new towns that facilitate economic dependence and political apathy and in so doing fulfill specific objectives of the state. And yet, neither they nor the bureaucrats that implement the designs need necessarily see themselves as manipulators of the citizenry. They might instead see their work as a responsibility to improve the lives of the inhabitants.

6. CONCLUSION

Capital investment in the built environment, as mediated and organized in the course of urban planning, frequently involves the displacement of people, the disruption of neighborhoods, and the destruction of familiar landscapes. As the example of the Belice reconstruction will show below, the spaces of home, work, and public life have been dismantled and replaced with unfamiliar structures, new forms of economic dependence, and altered patterns of political exchange and social interaction. Harvey highlights the underlying significance of this immense power: "The perpetual reshaping of the geographical landscape of capitalism is a process of violence and pain" (Harvey 1985b: 29). Presumably, this process of urban change is even more violent and painful when, after the traditional environment is suddenly destroyed, inhabitants are denied the right to influence and determine their own structures and movement within the built environment they inhabit, as they were in the Belice Valley.

In spite of the tendency of the spatial environment to be "deeply entrenched" and "spontaneously internalized" in people's experience, different circumstances and situations in the development of settlement evoke different levels of understanding and awareness of urban form. In short, fundamental architectural transformation involves a dramatic confrontation with expectations regarding a

cultural artifact as solid and fundamental as the built environment.

With the state's increasing involvement in urban planning has come the ever more bitter power struggles between those who determine the built environment and those who live within it. The violence and pain of which Harvey speaks can bring about response and reaction. Castells urges us to put this dynamic interaction into context: "The control over space is a major battle in the historic war between people and the state" (Castells 1983: 70). Architecture and planning can be more than a mere "technique of exercising power" according to Foucault (Foucault 1977: 23). The planned environment, be it the school, the city street, or the home, always includes a potential axis around which struggle may develop (Foucault 1977: 309). Despite the increasing penetration of the state in the lives of its citizenry there is the "distant roar" of rejection and protest (Foucault 1977). Thus, in viewing the built environment we must take into account the intentions and actions of competing interests both within and between the state bureaucracy, the capitalist economy, and the people living in the communities, for these interests create an inevitable tension and dynamism at the heart of all spatial transformations.

CHAPTER V

"THE STATE THAT MAKES ITSELF KING"¹

1. INTRODUCTION

Urban geographers argue that the built environment can be planned and shaped in an effort to accomplish specific economic and political objectives in contemporary capitalist states. How does this point of view apply to the case study of reconstruction in the Belice Valley? In previous chapters (I-III) I have provided what is essentially a narrative account of the earthquake and its aftermath. Special focus on the differences and similarities between the various Belice towns and on the unprecedented political mobilization of the region's population in a collective attempt to get assistance from the state, gave contour to the description of disaster and response. This was followed by an overview of the theoretical debates regarding the built environment as pivotal in social relations of power. In this chapter I employ the theoretical perspectives outlined in Chapter IV to orient analysis of the built environment in western Sicily, viewing it as a locale and object of contestation between those with power and capital who plan and build new

1. Antonio De Bonis uses this poignant statement in his (1979) article, "La vicenda allo specchio" ("The Event in the Mirror," or more roughly translated, "Reflections on the Earthquake").

towns and those with little power or capital who inhabit and transform these new settlements.

Protesters in the Belice presented a real challenge to the legitimacy and authority of the state. Media coverage clearly illustrated to the nation and the world their desperate situation and the extent to which the state had systematically neglected the area, both prior to and following the earthquake. The methods and demands of the protest--both political and economic--proved especially confrontational and threatening to governmental authority. The movement was cross-class, regionally-based, and greatly appealing; striking an empathetic chord throughout the South, it received support from many sides. Refusing to pay taxes and fulfill their military obligation, protestors aimed attack directly at the perogatives of the state and its power to redistribute income and conscript the military. Furthermore, by demanding economic development as the central goal in reconstruction, they called for the reorganization of the national economy. These aspects of the movement presented an essential challenge to enduring regional inequality--that is, the locational pattern of industry and capital in the rich North and labor reserves in the poor South--as it is mediated and managed by the Italian state.

The common theme sounded throughout all the issues and events associated with the protest movement was the clamorous appeal for state intervention. What kind of

intervention did the state intend and finally provide? Did the state acquiesce to all or any of the demands of the Belice population? How did political considerations and economic interests guide specific actions of the government in the Belice reconstruction? Did the state try to shape the built environment so that future protests might be aborted or avoided altogether? What did the state have in mind for the long-term role and development of the area into which it was investing so many billions of lire? What new forms of urban structure were envisioned as the state implemented particular policies and programs? And, how can we observe the expression of specific goals of state planners and architects manifest in the new towns of the Belice Valley? In this chapter I address these questions regarding patterns of state intervention and the processes associated with constructing and inhabiting the built environment.

Seeing architecture as a political tool in the exercise of power requires that we look at the institutional framework in which urban planning operates and the built environment which is created. Discussion of three general issues--urban planning culture in Italy, specific examples of planning in Sicily's history, and the legislative guidelines within which urban planning has operated in the postwar period--opens the chapter. A brief review of planning before 1968 underscores the unprecedented and extraordinary nature of the earthquake

reconstruction. The imperative to reconstruct the Belice towns presented new opportunities for increased state intervention and market penetration by means of spatial regulation and control. This is particularly evident in the new legislative guidelines established by the government and used by the planners after the earthquake. I close with an examination of the Belice new towns and new neighborhoods to determine if the political and economic objectives of the state do in fact find expression in the changing built environment. I find that while these objectives are reflected in the reconstructed spaces, they are simultaneously crosscut by political-economic manipulations associated with patronage and corruption that prey upon the enormous financing by the government.

2. URBAN PLANNING: THE ITALIAN CONTEXT

Urbanistica, or city planning as it is translated from the Italian, refers to many aspects of settlement and community life; it includes questions of ecology, hygiene and sanitation, industry and commerce, transportation and road networks, construction and real estate, land use and architecture, and public works and infrastructure. In the Italian, **urbanità**, or urbanity, means more than a mere association with cities. The concept encompasses a moral component, **civiltà**, referring to civility, or polite, courteous behavior; quintessentially urban in character, even residents of the smallest towns and villages pride

themselves on their *civiltà* (Silverman 1975). Urban planning has been explained and justified as a civilizing project, bringing order and control to the otherwise chaotic patterns of social life. It comes as no surprise therefore that in Italy urban planning has generally favored the interests of urban residents and politics over those of the countryside. Construction, development, and an emphasis on the expansionary character of towns and cities has dominated trends in urbanism (Bardazzi 1984: 27).

Urban planning in Italy had its roots in private business. The factory towns were the earliest form of planned environments, where the very form of the settlement was predicated on the goal of an efficient and profitable labor process. Owners of factory towns used design and management to influence all aspects of laborers' daily routines with rigid spatial and temporal controls over behavior associated with places of domestic life, work, recreation, and social and political exchange (Schuman 1991).

The owner of the highly successful office machines company, Adriano Olivetti did much to influence the emerging field of urban planning in Italy in the 1950s. Using sociological perspectives in the design of his own factory cities (e.g., Ivrea and Pozzuoli, Naples), Olivetti applied ideas then considered progressive in an attempt to more adequately link his workers' needs to their

residential and work environments. He also financed a large-scale regional plan for the Val d'Aosta area, which has served as a prototype throughout the country, integrating settlement and industry into a coordinated model.²

In a study of planning in capitalist society, Richard Fogelson points out that planned projects by private companies such as Olivetti's were far more effective than the later state projects, due to their authoritarian structure and clear class bias (Fogelson 1986: 253). There was no compromise or even the presumption of democratic process to interfere with expression of the goals of the designer and financier.³ And yet this did not discourage the state from intervening in the urban process.

In Italy, the state became most actively involved with urban planning during Fascism in the late 1920s and 1930s. In an attempt to centralize government control, many aspects of public and private life were penetrated and shaped by Fascist dogma and cultural ideology. Neither compulsory education, official church doctrine, popular

2. Olivetti's attempts to expand the range of planning beyond the factory and town are still recognized and applauded in Italy, where regional planning instruments remain scarce in many areas. On Olivetti's efforts to develop urban planning in Italy see De Bonis 1979: 145-146; Bardazzi 1984: 32; Gregotti 1968: 77. Some of Olivetti's own writings are included in Fabbri et. al. 1984.

3. Bastianini and Urbani point out that effective democracies may in fact inhibit successful planning because all of the involved parties have their own interests to represent and promote (Bastianini and Urbani 1972: 369).

culture, nor the media escaped Fascist standardization and regulation (Mack Smith 1982).

Urban planning was well suited to the objectives of the Fascist government in its attempt to control the minutia of daily life. First, there was a successful effort to consolidate the building sector under state direction (Guarrasi 1981: 31-32). Perhaps more importantly, discussion of "scientific" town planning was initiated by Italian architects in the 1920s. **Urbanistica** was conceived of as a rational approach to land use, settlement structure, and building design, legitimated both by its standing as an academic discipline and its professional role. Since its inception, urban planning has been a focus of division and debate in Italy.

Divisions along lines of stylistic approach and political ideology emerged in sharp relief with the increasing involvement of the Fascist government in urban planning. The Modernist/Rationalist movement (represented by Gruppo 7 and Giuseppe Terragni) was centered in the northern industrial cities of Turin and Milan. Oriented by Le Corbusier's (1926) **Towards an Architecture**, these architects and planners distanced themselves from the Fascist regime, emphasizing logic and an ideal order as the functional basis of modern architecture (Gregotti 1968: 17). By contrast, the Classical movement (e.g., Milanese 900) represented a politics of reaction. These architects were embraced by the Fascists since their representations

of history gave ideological support to the regime. Separately these groups influenced the major urban renewal plans instituted by the Fascist government, in which old historic districts were demolished and replaced by modern housing projects. By the 1940s, the political standoff broke down. While the Classical architects became official representatives of the Fascist government, those of the Modernist-Rationalist movement were persecuted as enemies of the state; "what had been a problem of style became a problem of death and freedom" for them (Gregotti 1968: 36).

Despite the politics of struggle and oppression that characterized planning under Fascism, an important legislative apparatus was established during the Fascist era that has served as the basis of all subsequent planning in Italy. The first planning instrument to supercede the Napoleonic Codes of the 1860s was drawn up by Mussolini's government.⁴ The **Legge Urbanistica** n. 1150 (17 August 1942), referred to also as the 1942 Planning Law, is the most significant planning instrument in Italy of this century. The primary objective of the law was to limit and direct urban growth (Fried 1973: 250). For the first time,

4. Various obstacles interfered with the issuance of this planning law--most notably delays caused by the dictator himself. Mussolini required the involvement of a highly complicated administrative structure in the formation of the law and shelved its appeal for over a year. King Victor Emmanuel III hesitated before signing the law, explaining to its sponsor, Minister of Public Works Giuseppe Gorla, that he wanted Rome to grow bigger to better shadow and engulf Vatican City (Gorla in Fried 1973: 250-251).

national standards, institutions, and financial procedures were established and systematically organized. Mandatory codes for building and zoning were set forth, as were the diverse types of plans for land use patterns and settlement structure. The different levels of government authority responsible for these tasks were identified as well (Bastianini and Urbani 1972: 359).

Planning Law no. 1150 stipulated three major planning instruments: the Territorial Coordination Plan (**Piano Territoriale**), the Municipal Master Plan (**Piano Regolatore Generale**, or PRG), and the Particularized Plan (or the **Piano Particolareggiato**, a definitional document used to execute the PRG). The methods and means required to create and implement these plans were specified as well. They were to originate with the towns, receive first approvals from the provincial governments, and then be sent to the central government's Ministry of Public Works (Ministero di Lavori Pubblici) for final approval and partial financing.

With the aim of uniform imposition from Rome, the legal code of 1942 regulated various aspects of housing and settlement, including hygiene, building standards, locational requirements, and general land use issues (Mack Smith 1982: 168). The Master Plan, the PRG, is the most relevant planning instrument for any town with a population over 10,000 people. It specifies patterns of land use, population densities, public services, transportation, and road networks in relation to population densities (De Bonis

1979: 133; Bastianini and Urbani 1972: 360). Smaller towns are obligated to establish basic building plans in the more limited **Programma di Fabbricazione**, or Building Program. Regulations regarding subdivisions and national building standards were also established in the 1942 Planning Law, replacing the inadequate codes of the 1860s, which stipulated little more than rudimentary hygienic measures (Angotti 1977: 17-18).

The 1942 law is predicated on the distribution of powers specific to the one-party, authoritarian government of the Fascist regime. Although drawn up by Mussolini's government, the 1942 Planning Law did not operate during its sponsor's reign; it was only under a multi-party democracy in the postwar period that the law was enacted. Because of the disjuncture between its totalitarian origins and its more democratic realizations, it has never been "sufficiently independent of local pressures and interests" to fully carry out the authoritarian objectives assumed by the highly centralized Fascist government when drawing it up (Bastianini and Urbani 1972: 369).

In the postwar period, the legal structure of urban planning in Italy has become frustratingly complex and characterized by competing, often contradictory, objectives. The very structure of authority has shifted frequently in Italian planning law between the national level, the regional level (e.g. laws of 1948, 1970, and 1972) and the local level (e.g. laws of 1961, 1967, 1971,

1977). As written, the central government is responsible for territorial planning and large-scale coordination, while the town governments oversee local building and zoning codes. Notwithstanding the legislative authority of town governments (at least theoretically), the role of the national government foreseen in the 1942 Planning Law is significant. It sets forth standards and rules to which all towns must conform. By contrast, provincial governments have had relatively little impact on urban planning or housing policy (of the 931 Italian provinces, 9 are in Sicily) (Angotti 1977: 21; Bardazzi 1984: 27).

Since most towns and cities failed to fulfill the 1942 Planning Law requirements that they draw up and implement the PRG's, political parties of the Left began to agitate for planning reforms in the late 1960s (Angotti 1977: 18). Furthermore, the national government failed to coordinate planning policies to extend beyond the boundaries of local communities, so Rome gave over responsibility for planning and urbanism to regional governments in the 1970s (1970 and 1972). Mandated town plans, building codes, public housing statutes, and regulation over illegal building, were among the tasks reassigned to the regions (Bardazzi 1984: 27).

Sicily's status since 1946 as an autonomous region⁵ meant

5. Sicily was granted autonomous status in 1946. The regional government, located in Palermo's architecturally-notable Palazzo dei Normanni, is responsible for overseeing policy decisions regarding architecture and economic development, industry and commerce, mineral rights and natural resources, as well as urban planning (Barbera 1980b: 60).

that urbanism was theoretically assumed by the regional government at an earlier date. Nevertheless, this level of planning was only fully carried out after the legislative decrees of the 1970s (e.g., DPR 15 January 1972, n. 8).

Despite shifting arrangements of authority, town governments continue to bear primary responsibility for much building and zoning regulation (Bardazzi 1984: 35). Each of Italy's 8096 towns, or *comuni*, are governed by an elected council; the town "mayor controls local building by granting, refusing or annulling building permits" (Bastianini and Urbani 1972: 365). While conferred great power over planning, town governments frequently lack the resources necessary to carry out the plans they mandate (Fried 1973: 294; Bardazzi 1984: 35). The deflection of planning responsibilities on to the town has resulted in diverse outcomes. In some northern cities this meant more democratic planning practices were developed (Angotti and Dole 1976), while in other areas it resulted in the total neglect of government controls over private speculative building. In Sicily, it has meant that mafia cliques have been able to take a larger, more significant role with the range of power extending over real estate speculation, tax collection, voting, jobs, and water supply (Mack Smith 1968: 492-493).

Legal restrictions regarding time limits for developing and instituting town plans also demonstrate the contradictory features of Italian planning. Because laws

setting up deadlines (e.g. 1962, 1968, 1977) were so widely disregarded and evaded, so-called "bridge laws" repeatedly set new time limits to supercede the previous ones (Angotti 1977: 18). And since different levels of legislative authority--national, regional, and municipal--lacked coordination and frequently failed to communicate their plans and intentions to each other, bureaucratic paralysis resulted more often than compromise in planning decisions.

In this context, uncontrolled speculative building and rebuilding have characterized patterns of urban development throughout Italy in the postwar period. Most of Europe had to rebuild after the widespread destruction of World War II. De Cecco points out that of all the Western European countries, Italy alone confronted the task of postwar reconstruction with reference neither to Keynesian policy nor to the guidelines established by urban planning regulations (De Cecco 1972). After the fall of Fascism, the national government came under the control of the Christian Democratic Party (DC), famous (or infamous) for its laissez-faire attitude toward urban development. Private interests operated unencumbered by building and zoning regulations, resulting in a ubiquitous pattern of "oil slick" development, (Angotti 1977: xiv; Bardazzi 1984). In short, "under the Christian Democratic government, tutelage of the land simply amounted to a wild free-for-all of development" (Trabalzi 1991: 144).

This urban growth had quite different geographical consequences. Although growth was rapid in the northern cities,⁶ a balance of sorts was struck between the increase in residence and industrial development (Guarrasi 1981: 40). Jobs kept pace with the changing population; urban growth was shaped by the needs of industry and followed patterns established by the expanding northern economy.

The growth patterns of cities in the Mezzogiorno, by contrast, followed general trends of marginality in late capitalism (Guarrasi 1981: 37-38). While cities south of Rome grew at dramatic rates, notwithstanding the losses due to emigration, no economic development emerged to absorb the population growth. These cities were "fractured" by a deep and growing split between the population and economic opportunity. In this process, "hyperurbanization" combined with "hyperpolarization" to increase the marginality and dependency of the big southern cities (e.g., Naples, Palermo, Bari, and Catania) (Guarrasi 1981: 41; 37; 47). Consequently, residential development was haphazard and uncoordinated and lacked the necessary services or infrastructure to effectively support it.

3. PLANNING CULTURE AND PLANNERS IN ITALY

Poor planning in the postwar period resulted in irreversible damage to the urban environment. Ecological

6. Between 1951 and 1977 Milan grew by 63%, Turin by 89%, and Rome by 75% (ISTAT in Guarrasi 1981: 41).

disasters, inadequate provisioning of public services, lack of direction in urban development, and the destruction of the coastline with speculative sprawl, all took their toll on the historical landscape. Raw sewage was dumped daily off the famous Italian Riviera coastline, making it unappealing to tourists. Traffic tied up all the cities, and smog and industrial pollution threatened the health of Italians. Rich farmland was rapidly lost to the uncontrolled spread of suburban residence. In short, patterns of land use and urbanism in Italy were reduced to chaos. There were "no pretenses, not even formal ones, to anything else" (Gregotti 1968: 65).

While calls for urban planning legislation were heard throughout the 1950s, it was not until the late 1960s that capital and the state recognized urban planning as a primary means to achieve their separate and shared goals. Earlier efforts at planning reform by the political Left began to appeal to business interests. Attracted to potential markets for prefabricated construction materials, which imported technology was making widely available at the time, capital began to call for urban planning and housing reform. Furthermore, the growing acuteness of urban problems associated with massive internal migrations and uncontrolled development threatened the economic well-being of the country (Gregotti 1968: 79).

At this time, urban planning emerged as a popular and legitimate field of study, incorporated academically within

university architecture departments. Indeed, since its initial development during Fascism and the postwar period, planning had become an established discipline, with a stature equal to that of architecture. In these schools oriented to professional degrees in planning there was a tendency to focus more on "abstract philosophizing" than on the practical aspects of implementation and construction (Bastianini and Urbani 1972: 366). While neopositivist approaches stressed the sociological and political aspects of planning with emphasis on monumental building, there was increasing neglect of technical expertise and declining attention toward residential design (Gregotti 1968: 106). It is ironic that as planning and architecture emphasized "scientific rationalisation" and ideals of industrial organization, at the same time architects and planners were losing or relinquishing real responsibility for the technical aspects of building to engineers and builders (Crawford 1991).

There was some debate regarding the politics of planning in the postwar period. While we saw in the last chapter that Modernism was dominant in planning and architecture, it was by no means the only important perspective. Neo-Realism had considerable impact as well, with its emphasis on working-class lifestyle and on the voice of the masses as the "repository" of "truth" (Trabalzi 1991: 146). The architect, Mario Ridolfi, stressed principles of vernacular peasant design and viewed

the architect as merely a technician responsible for representing inhabitants' needs (De Bonis 1979: 140). In Sicily, some state housing projects designed by Guiseppe Samonà in the 1950s reflect the Neo-Realist attempt to celebrate an idealized peasant past for the inhabitants (who ironically enough held bureaucratic jobs). But, through art and politics of the 1960s--films by Pier Paolo Pasolini and the rebellions of workers and students--the life of the working classes was revealed as demoralizing, dehumanizing, and degraded (Trabalzi 1991: 137). An enthusiasm in architecture and planning for taking up the banner of the poor and powerless was eclipsed by the more influential Modernist and Post-Modernist ideologies and styles (De Bonis 1979). The emphasis on industry, technology, and the streamlined functionality of Modernism predominated, replacing the focus on particularities of time, place, and culture as they relate to settlement. As I will show below, these orientations influenced the ideas used in planning the Belice Valley reconstruction, as culturally specific and locally appropriate architecture and planning was eschewed.

4. URBAN PLANNING IN SICILY

The influence of state power through urban planning was minimal in Sicily prior to the 1968 earthquake and reconstruction. The outside regulation of Sicilian towns took at best the mundane form of prohibiting pigs in homes

as an attempt to enforce public hygiene (Salomone-Marino 1981: 194; Valussi 1968: 11)! Since the last century, Sicilians have simultaneously complained about the lack of public authority and centralized power in peasant towns and taken advantage of its absence. Indeed, it has been a point of pride and prestige in western Sicilian culture to circumvent state regulations, avoid paying taxes, and use the neglect of the state to one's own advantage (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 84-86, 109). Blatant violation of "the rules and judicial institutions of officialdom" define honor and masculinity in western Sicily (Arlacchi 1986: 4; Pitre in Arlacchi 1986: 6).

Scholars offer compelling explanations for Sicily's history of underdevelopment and agricultural stagnation, placing significant emphasis on exploitative class relations and the absence of state power or its corruption on the local level. This has been especially so in the western interior of the island where the rapid expansion of mafia late in the last century was linked to the compromised authority of the young Italian state (Mack Smith 1968: 466-468; Schneider and Schneider 1976: 195-198; Catanzaro 1988: 4). As Anton Blok (1974) describes in his book, **The Mafia of a Sicilian Village**, the structure of local politics has been characterized since Italy's Unification by an alliance between mafia coalitions and the elite associated with the young state. Peter Schneider, Jane Schneider, and Edward Hansen (1972) demonstrate the

ways these coalitions have blocked state influence locally, effectively ensuring the continuation of underdevelopment and dramatic social inequality.

It is no surprise that the major historical exception to the weak exercise of state power occurred during the Fascist period. Fascism, characterized as the time of greatest undiluted state power in Sicily's modern history, introduced new levels of totalitarian control in the personal and public lives of the population. It was only during Fascism (1925-1945) that state authority increased and its presence was directly experienced on the local level. Having the "trains run on time" implied much more than the rationalization of the rail system. It referred to the effective imposition of government power on the hinterlands, the presence of an outside, impersonal authority in the community (at least theoretically).

The Fascist government wanted to assume exclusive control over the means of violence and to reassure the landowning elite that the state could "guarantee order" against threats from the Left or the mafia (Catanzaro 1988: 108). As part of a government effort to centralize its authority and control, Mussolini's Prefect Cesare Mori was dispatched to Sicily with the specific task of challenging and eradicating alternative power bases. Although trumpeted as a victory for the common man, the raid on the mafia brought about a decrease in crime and an increase in land values, both of which ultimately benefitted the small

class of powerful landowners (Duggan 1989; Stille 1995). Prefect Mori was only partially successful in dismantling mafia networks, and after uncovering linkages between mafiosi and powerful political figures, his mission was terminated and he was recalled to Rome (Hess 1973).

The Fascist government installed the figure of the **podestà**, an official sent from Rome to oversee each town government. Alternative and legitimate forms of citizens' representation were eliminated or transformed as the Fascist party became "the sole intermediary between the population and the state" (Catanzaro 1988: 108). Trade unions and political parties were dismantled and replaced by Fascist surrogates. The increase in state power was thus achieved by disrupting (low-level) mafia structures and by minimizing citizen involvement in government. The "objective of the ruling bloc had become the very abolition of civil society as a sphere of independent activity" (Lumley 1990: 19).

The Fascist government used urban planning as a method to govern and regulate Italian society. Attempts to manage the distribution and movement of the population was a significant objective of the state. Planning in Sicily during this time took the form of decentralizing and ruralizing the population for political and economic reasons. Population dispersion was viewed as a way to simultaneously strengthen Sicily's role as breadbasket, to increase Italy's independence in the world market, to

absorb an underemployed peasantry no longer permitted to emigrate overseas, and to break up the Partisan strongholds in the North. To meet these needs, the government built dispersed hamlets scattered throughout the previously uninhabited countryside (Mack Smith 1968: 518), and relocated peasants from overcrowded agrotowns, and from the politicized areas of north-central Italy, into these settlements. But the new hamlets failed to attract residents despite their imaginative names (Mussoliniana was one) and the lure of cheap housing and free land (Mack Smith 1968: 520-521; 1982: 103). Not only did they lack services and infrastructure; they were generally unappealing to inhabitants, located as they were in remote areas plagued by banditry, malaria, and isolation (Mack Smith 1968: 533). Abandoned for years, today these settlements increasingly serve as second homes for **villeggiatura**.

Postwar urban planning projects in Sicily have been partial, limited, and aimed in different directions. The capital city, Palermo, has been characterized by the chaotic and largely unregulated development of its periphery, and by decay of the historic center (Chubb 1982; Guarrasi 1981). Guttled buildings and neglected neighborhoods throughout the center still recall the bomb damage of World War II. Heavy beams span the narrow cobblestone streets in the poor quarters in a makeshift attempt to support the dilapidated housing (Cole 1996,

1997). Furious development on the periphery--what Guarrasi calls "marginal hyperurbanization"--has absorbed vast amounts of capital. The poor were partially removed from the center, the internal ring of the city was built and rebuilt with more profitable middle- and upper-class housing, financed by speculative investment on the part of mafiosi and private business (Chubb 1982; Guarrasi 1981: 42-43). Some of the poor were relocated in state-financed housing projects on the periphery (e.g., Zona Espansione Nord, usually called **lo ZEN**). An urban sprawl of low-income housing projects and middle-income apartment blocks in the city's periphery has irreparably damaged the characteristic **conca d'oro**, or ring of golden citrus groves that once surrounded Palermo.

The uncontrolled urban development occurring throughout postwar Italy was present in Sicily as well, giving mafia a new source of lucrative income in real estate and construction. "The political class of the South, corrupt and clientelistic, presided contendedly over this spectacularly uneven development" (Ginsborg 1990: 338). Moving out of the past role of mediator, mafiosi assumed an entrepreneurial position in the building industry (Arlacchi 1986). No longer involved with specifically rural activities associated with animal husbandry and communication networks, the mafia moved into pursuits more urban in context and nature (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 183-184). Allied primarily with the Christian Democratic

Party, mafia figures were in a strong position to manipulate bidding and receive public works contracts. Builders ignored zoning laws and building codes or readily gained exemption from them, and industrial development (that could have generated more productive economic alternatives) was blocked by powerful mafia interests (Mack Smith 1968: 529, 239-42; Chubb 1982).

In the countryside of western Sicily building and zoning codes were similarly absent or neglected in the context of rapid development. But development was not linked to productive growth of the economy (Amin 1985). The few industrial development schemes which were implemented failed quickly and were abandoned as "cathedrals in the desert." These failures recall the past exclusion of western Sicily (and its built environment) from the continual process of capital circulation by means of investment in productive industry and real economic development. Instead, Sicily's role in the circuit of investment and production has been limited to that of an important labor reserve; for a century its inclusion in the world market has been primarily as a source of emigrant labor (Schneider and Schneider 1976). Emigrants have returned with remittances to build new houses on the peripheries of the agrotowns, sprawling out from the historical centers (Blok 1974: 80; Schneider and Schneider 1976: 209). Meanwhile, the local building authorities ignored or overlooked construction activity that

contravened ordinances or codes, even failing to register what local people refer to as "abusive" houses. Whole neighborhoods sprung up in the 1960s and 1970s, making real estate development and construction the island's most viable, and vital, industry.

The result along the Sicilian coastline has been dramatic as well. As a consequence of the deployment of emigration remittances into first and second home construction, whole settlements have sprung up with houses randomly placed on oddly shaped lots, reached by dirt path roads improvised by residents. Sewage pipes lead down to a nearby water source that feeds into the sea, menacing bathers. Although serviced by national telephone and electric companies, these settlements are often unrecorded by any town and lack a legal existence.

I accompanied an informant to an all day meeting of town officials, planners, and architects in a Sicilian community on the southern coast. These men (no women participated) were convened in an effort to "rationalize" (or, to bring into regulation) a community of 2500 houses built along the beach front. No reference was made to the government's right to demolish these illegally built residences. Instead, the participants emphasized the need to provide the settlement with infrastructure and give it a legal status vis-à-vis the nearby town. The fact that the meeting was dominated by Communists and Socialists indicates that all political persuasions were involved in

the business of unplanned and uncontrolled construction. On another occasion I asked about a group of new houses built along the beach on the northern coast, lining the area between the sea and the railroad tracks. Clearly this beachfront was state-owned land, part of railroad property. Informants reassured me that among these houses was one owned by a judge, thus no restrictions would apply, no punishment would follow. Fortunate were his neighbors, they laughed.

In conclusion, massive residential construction in postwar Sicily created a radically transformed built environment, one both chaotic and uncontrolled. Building activity overlapped with the underground political economy in important ways; while it vastly enriched the newly powerful mafia interests (Angotti 1977: 102), it eluded state control and escaped legislative management by local government. The degraded state of the built environment and urban planning in Sicily--evident in the magnitude of illegal building and the unchallenged mafia control over the construction industry--was a good indication of the "institutional disintegration of Italian society that marked the 1970s" (Arlacchi 1986: xiv). The fact that once sleepy and unproductive towns bustled and that many of the unemployed got jobs associated with residential construction indicated the absence of other opportunities better adapted to the long-term economic benefit of the island.

5. PLANNING IN THE BELICE VALLEY AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

Given the condition of an absent or ill-applied regulatory apparatus and the flurry of speculative sprawl and illegal building that resulted from it, the task of earthquake reconstruction confronting the Italian government assumed enormous proportions. There was very little in the way of a pre-established foundation for building and zoning codes that could have been adapted for the reconstruction. It was in the context of this legislative vacuum that the state undertook the Belice reconstruction project.

We have seen that a dearth of planning regulations and an unwillingness of the state to manage urban development characterized the postwar period. By contrast, a great surge in planning followed the earthquake; there were suggestions, recommendations, mandates, and stipulations for formulating plans for the region, territories, towns, and building codes. Comprehensive zoning documents and economic development plans promised big changes, as did plans for transferring the population, building a new road network, and relocating cities.

By piecing together the hierarchical planning structure envisioned by the government soon after the earthquake, the confusing myriad of officials, agencies, politicians, planners, and their overlapping functions and responsibilities becomes more evident. Good intentions, sound political objectives, hopes for growth and change,

merged with plans to speculate, profit, and promote. These competing objectives all eventually entangled in the huge and complicated web of earthquake laws and planning legislation.

Following the earthquake, Law n. 241 (18 March 1968) established an agency under the authority of the national Ministry of Public Works to oversee the entire reconstruction process. Law n. 241 stipulated that the agency, the Ispettorato generale per le zone terremotate, (Inspector General for the Earthquaked Zones, henceforth referred to as the Ispettorato) was created for the "provision of total or partial reconstruction." The law specifies the extensive responsibilities of the Ispettorato as well as its subagencies, established to oversee particular aspects of reconstruction (ISES 1972: 37). The bureaucracy of the earthquake reconstruction administration grew in complexity until it had become a "dense bureaucratic foliage," yet another example of what one commentator called "the only real Italian forest" (Emiliani in Ginsborg 1990: 150).

The Istituto per lo sviluppo dell'edilizia sociale, (or Institute for the Development of Public Building, henceforth referred to as ISES) emerged as the single most important subagency within the Ispettorato. Set up in April 1968 with a budget of 46 billion lire to plan, approve, and carry out the reconstruction of new towns, it held enormous power. By 1972 its budget had grown to 110

billion lire (ISES 1972: 15). It was responsible for drawing up and implementing all the levels of planning for reconstruction and for overseeing the passage of plans through each of the other layers of bureaucratic hierarchy. ISES was obligated to realize 1) the infrastructural works ranging from sewage piping and electricity lines to the layout of town squares; 2) the public services ranging from nursery schools and town halls to the slaughter house and the sports fields; and 3) the housing for all residents--those on public aid for housing, those belonging to housing cooperatives, and those involved with the private housing market (ISES 1972: 72-73). In short, ISES was an "unquestioned monarchy" exercising full power over the entire reconstruction (**Giornale di Sicilia** 15 January 1988).

The reconstruction process was conceptualized in different phases. First, the national government was to provide studies specifying the geologically sound areas in each town's territory on which it was possible to repair or build new settlements. Ideally, these decisions were based on purely physical criteria regarding soil type, elevation, and seismic vulnerability. Then the region was to draw up Comprehensive Plans. Of the nine Comprehensive Plans for the island, two were to include areas damaged by the earthquake. Individual towns were responsible for PRGs and Building Codes. The Plans for Transferal (**Piani di Trasferimenti**) and the Building Plans (**Programmi di**

Fabbricazione) were to issue from the ISES agency, while the Ispettorato was responsible for final approvals. Overlapping duties and shared responsibilities greatly confused the creation and implementation of the plans. For instance, the ISES agency was to manage the Territorial Coordination Plan and carry out the Plan for Transferal, but only after the Ispettorato had expropriated the land to be used for the new towns. The Ispettorato in turn could not expropriate without assessments from the provincial governments and local approvals.

Despite the swirl of planning legislation and activity, the reconstruction of the Belice towns bumped along slowly, very slowly. The complex financing arrangements, the difficult task of setting up an administrative structure in a context where decisions were usually based on clientalism among political cronies, the contradictory command hierarchy of government offices and agencies, and the lack of coordination between the different levels of planning are all factors that contributed to excessively long delays in reconstruction. Local plans contradicted territorial plans. Territorial plans overlapped one another without coordination of road networks or specially zoned areas. Town governments resisted the imposition of regional planning goals, and the regional government resisted authority of the central government.

For instance, the creation of the nine Comprehensive Plans was stipulated in the very first earthquake law (The Civil and Economic Renewal of Areas Hit by the 1967 and 1968 Earthquakes, 3 February 1968, n. 1).⁷ In an attempt to link individual town plans to regional planning goals, the Comprehensive Plans were to encompass 92 of Sicily's 380 towns and cities. Article 2 of this law sets forth goals to repair and rebuild damaged areas and their surrounds following guidelines of the Comprehensive Plan regarding boundaries, infrastructure, and historic and touristic resources. Ideally the large-scale approach of the Comprehensive Plans would supercede the local PRGs and Building Plans, eventually rendering them unimportant (Grado and Russo 1985: 22).

Yet, these ambitious goals at coordinated planning never came to pass in the Belice reconstruction. The new structure of approvals granted consortia (groups of planners and representatives from different towns) responsibility for establishing the Comprehensive Plans, while town governments reserved the right of final approval. The towns fought to retain the old structures of authority and power associated with the local level PRGs and Building Plans. The consortia, disorganized, ineffective, and lacking administrative clout, were in no

7. From the law's title, it is clear that legislators expected to combine the effects of the preceding and successive tremors with those of the January earthquake in damage assessments and relief plans.

position to impose their plans. Corruption and the emphasis on abstract objectives rather than the practical realities of land use patterning dealt the final blows to Comprehensive Plans and ambitions for large-scale urban planning (De Bonis 1979: 135; Grado and Russo 1985: 23). In the end, the only component of the Comprehensive Plans that differed significantly from the previous urban trends was that of extensive road development--the most lucrative aspect of settlement reconstruction (De Bonis 1979: 135). ISES proposed an "equipped axis," a major road network within and between towns, combining fast roads with the Palermo-Mazara del Vallo **autostrada** (ISES 1972). At a cost of 6 billion lire (over 5 million dollars), only five kilometers were built before these ambitious plans for road development, along with those for Comprehensive Plans, were abandoned (**Giornale di Sicilia** 15 January 1988). In short, "the whole occurrence that should have represented a new politics and new direction for Sicily was ended in one blow, thus confirming the total failure of the Comprehensive Plan project" (De Bonis 1979: 135).

The exaggerated and extensive delays can also be traced to causes beyond the contradictory planning structure. Internal cleavages within the different levels of government--bureaucratic, administrative, and managerial--are often generated in the planning process (see Pickvance 1977). Some argue that the highly centralized structure of control under the Ispettorato

dragged out the time of reconstruction (**Giornale di Sicilia** 15 January 1988). Others, such as the two past directors of the Ispettorato (Luigi Corona and Enzo Pace), have pointed to the four levels of government bureaucracy set up for approvals to explain the long delays (**Giornale di Sicilia**, 22 January 1970; 15 January 1986). It has further been argued that the inadequacy of state financing made expeditious and effective reconstruction impossible (**Giornale di Sicilia** 15 January 1988; ISES 1972: 26). The regional government was accused of dragging its heels; given its characteristic disinterest, "incapacity," and "inefficiency," the mayors were left to themselves to agitate (**scaldare la sedia**) for government assistance (**Gazetta del Sud** 14 January 1988; **Giornale di Sicilia** 15 January 1988; Barbera 1980a: 61).

Moreover, the many levels of bureaucratic involvement with the reconstruction provided opportunities for corruption and embezzlement. Examples of inefficiency and scandal were so common that they became mundane during the course of the reconstruction. From the onset, "games played by local interests" slowed things down (ISES 1972: 23).⁸ Corruption was present at all levels, increasing costs and delaying reconstruction. As a popular Sicilian

8. One need only compare costs of public housing to detect large discrepancies. For each inhabitant in Torino, for example, where real estate costs are high, new public housing cost 83,000 lire while in the Belice the public housing agency spent 1,319,000 lire per each inhabitant (De Bonis 1979: 119).

proverb points out: a fish stinks from the head. And, in fact, the director of the Ispettorato was charged with private profiteering from public office in 1984 (De Bonis 1979: 119). (A few years later, after a judge in the case was murdered by the mafia, this official was absolved of all criminal charges.) A few years before, the head of ISES, the Regional Director of Public Works, and the Director of Civil Engineering for Sicily were arrested and convicted for corruption charges (**Giornale di Sicilia** 14 January 1986). Illegal schemes and embezzlement permeated each level, greatly inflating the costs of reconstructed housing. New houses in Salemi, for instance, were nicknamed the **case d'oro**, or houses made of gold. They were estimated to cost four times the price of an equivalent house built in one of Palermo's most prestigious districts, the Piazza Politeama (**Gazzetta del Sud** 14 January 1988). The judge responsible for investigating the corruption behind Salemi's **case d'oro** was gunned down in 1978 (**L'Or**a 15 January 1988). In 1988, twenty years after the earthquake, 37 investigations were still pending against officials of the Ispettorato (**Gazzetta del Sud** 14 January 1988).

In the context of this "earthquake of plans," as Mayor Corrao of Gibellina so aptly put it, was a new round of legislation in the second half of the 1970s. In 1976 Earthquake Law n. 241 was replaced by Law n. 178, which overturned the morass of previous legislation and at last

cleared the way for reconstruction by lightening the procedural burden and assigning more influence to local agencies. Two years later, Law n. 464 provided the financing (202 billion lire) needed to carry out the mandates of Law. n. 178.

With this legislation to guide them, ISES officials began the reconstruction process using previously untested methods. Infrastructure has customarily followed residential construction in Italy. Using a model developed in postwar England and Scandinavia, ISES planners intended to reverse this with initial construction of infrastructure in the new towns, followed later by residential and public building (ISES 1972: 25, 27). Reconstruction was conceptualized as a three stage process: first, street, water, electricity, and sewage networks were to be built; then secondary works defined as public buildings (schools, town offices, churches, shopping centers) were to follow; thirdly, housing would complete the construction. The initial estimate for 800,000 cubic meters of construction works for the Belice Valley involved the resettlement of 47,761 people on 770 hectares (1902 acres) of new town areas in 70,000 rooms at a cost of over one million lire per room (ISES 1972: 16, 23). (All estimates have been revised many times, always upward.)

The first stage of providing new infrastructure began with the acquisition of land on which to build or rebuild the new towns. Site choice and expropriation, a formidable

enough task,⁹ proved especially conflictual, with politics, speculation, and contention characterizing the process more often than not. Plans and project approvals came next, followed by bidding, adjudication, and the assignment of construction contracts. Actual building of infrastructure constituted the final part of the first stage in the ISES reconstruction plans. While no town had completed this phase by 1972, all but Calatafimi had begun it between two and a half and four years after the quake. Some towns had streamlined the process of planning, approving, and building infrastructure (e.g., Vita, Santa Ninfa, Contessa Entellina, and Camporeale), while others were consistently mired down by conflict and delay (e.g., Salaparuta, Salemi, and Calatafimi) (ISES 1972: 14). The second stage involved the planning and construction of public or "popular" housing projects, which served to define the boundaries of the town in many cases. The third stage was to conclude the construction of private houses, a few of the secondary buildings such as churches and party offices, and some privately owned commercial buildings.

As one drives through Belice towns the stages of reconstruction achieved are apparent. Despite differences in settlement plan and urban structure, the patterns of construction--infrastructure and public services, followed

9. For instance, Montevago needed to expropriate 117,200 square meters for 915 habitations to house 2963 people while Gibellina expropriated 267,490 square meters of land for 1970 habitations for 6410 people (Renna et.al. 1979: 284, 252).

by public housing, then private housing, then non-essential public buildings--have created strange results. As of 1988, 3000 people still inhabited barracks in Santa Margherita di Belice; water was supplied only twice a month, there was no secondary school, and popular housing sat off by itself, empty and unassigned. The new hospital was in such a deplorable state, it ran the risk of being closed down (Morreale 1986: 8-9). Reconstruction was closer to completion in other towns. Some new town areas, such as the one linked to Partanna by a winding superhighway with an elevated cloverleaf, have had roads built, sidewalks laid out, but little housing constructed between these passageways. There might be an isolated strip of public housing off in the corner, or a cooperative building standing among the scruffy weeds. One gets the gloomy sensation of a child's toy town, left half built for more exciting distractions. De Bonis summarizes the unrealistic ambitions and decaying incompleteness well:

Added to the damage caused by the building companies are those idealized megastructures created by a few planners, planners who lacked a sense of their own history, and fit right into the reconstruction. All the pharoanic works remain unfinished: entire hillsides excavated in Salemi; enormous walls of gigantic proportions to support landslide areas that are themselves hillsides and **piazze** of cement, on which the new city will be built; pedestrian stairways on immense pilons with large spiral paths leading to ramparts upon which the planned churches will never be erected in Poggioreale; and a few houses built but uninhabitable due to the absence of indispensable hookups for water, sewage, and light. [De Bonis 1979: 120]

In contrast to this, other towns, such as Santa Ninfa, give a feeling of vitality. The spaces between sidewalks are filled with houses, driveways, a tree or a tended garden. School yards and community halls fill the gaps between homes, shops, and playgrounds. Stores, small industrial shops, and offices hum with activity during business hours. The **passeggiata** is crowded with old people strolling through the repaired old town and young people motoring up and down the boulevards of the new town. Though smaller and much less showy than Santa Ninfa, Vita appears to have successfully linked the new area with the old town, and there is much movement and activity between them.

Twenty years after the earthquake, the fieldsite of Calatafimi falls somewhere between these two extremes. Site choice and approval for the partial new town was bitterly antagonistic, splitting the town's population into two opposing camps. Petitions, political campaigns, and backroom manipulations characterized the lengthy battle. This stage alone took 11 years. The established elite wanted the new town to grow contiguously with the old, and thus maintain the integrity of the community. This proposed development was appropriately called **macchia d'olio** referring to the way a drop of oil spreads when spilled. A rising new middle class wanted to build, **tabula rasa**, on a new site. Sasi, an agricultural area 1.5 kilometers distant from the old town, was proposed. This

latter option, which ultimately prevailed, involved a more complex and expensive construction process, especially as infrastructure would be required on a massive scale.¹⁰

The connecting highway between the old and new town, a feat in engineering as it sits on pilons spanning deep cultivated valleys, was built by a northern firm. Roads and sidewalks through the new town were then laid down, followed by isolated public works (an elementary school as one enters Sasi and a sports field across the street from it) and the construction of **case popolari** (popular housing projects) on the far edge of the development. Then a cooperative project of 16 apartments was built, followed by another nearby of 10 apartments. At this time (1988), Sasi was full of gaping holes; central areas reserved for private housing were only partially built, and rarely inhabited. Just 35 private houses had been completed (Spano 1988). Private houses were often two-story affairs whose roof lines were dotted with cement posts with rods still protruding, indicating future plans to elevate, adding on one or more more floors. Unlandscaped lots

10. While conflict over site choice was common in all the towns, the terms and factions of the fights were not generalized. In Partanna, for example, the youth, the local administrators, and the Study Center worked to rebuild on a new site, **tabula rasa**, while the property owners and speculators opposed this option (*L'Orsa* 23-24 September 1969). Some claim ISES supported the more expensive alternative of greenfield sites for new towns because of the financial arrangement whereby ISES received a base percentage of all costs incurred (*Giornale di Sicilia* 1 January 1988). Whatever the reason, the **tabula rasa** approach to site choice was adopted in all but two of the reconstructed towns.

predominated in Sasi while areas set aside for stores stood nearly empty. Throughout the new settlement tough weeds and dry grasses grew between cement foundations and free-standing structures. The contrast with the agrotown is dramatic. Crowded with row upon row of inhabited houses, commercial and public buildings, the agrotown bustled with street life and drew in social and political activity, while Sasi stood quiet, unfinished, and unpromising.

What oriented the planners' visions and expectations with regards to the Belice? Clearly articulated goals, ambitious and dramatic, were provided by them and by the politicians. Examination of these goals helps to explain both the shape and form of the new built environment and the reasons behind the awkward adaptations experienced by the residents in the new towns.

A year or so after the earthquake, Italy's Public Works Minister, Giacomo Mancini, met with the local mayors. He requested that they put aside their own self-interest to instead carry out the goals of the state for the new towns: "Reconstruction should mean newer, more modern prospects for the earthquaked population, the breaking down of old ways and of old interests" (*Giornale di Sicilia* 2 April 1969). Another state official echoed this with the hope that the new towns would bring about "a radical change in lifestyle" for the inhabitants (*Giornale di Sicilia* 2 April 1969).

Modernism served as the stylistic and historical reference for the planning of the Belice Valley new towns (De Bonis 1979: 120; Renna 1979: 106-107). This "tradition of the new" (Jencks 1986) oriented the professional culture and education of planners and architects responsible for design of the new built environment. In the case of urban planning in post-earthquake Sicily, the project was one of improving the life of earthquaked peasants. Only this one ideological alternative was considered. Improvement meant modernization, a modernization of style, form, culture, and everyday life, a modernization that would transform a perceived backwardness and replace it with direct linkages to national and international culture and markets. According to Renna, architecture reveals well the "general social identity of an era." The architecture of the reconstruction, he argues, reveals a "constructed monster" (*mostra costruita*), as testimony of the "clerk city" built for the petite, urban bourgeoisie (Renna 1979: 111). In short, politicians and planners wanted to intervene in order to hasten the process of class transformation, turning an obsolete, provincial peasant class into an active and connected middle class.

Planning documents and interviews with officials of the Ispettorato reveal the major considerations behind the actual placement and design of the new towns.¹¹ New towns

11. While some objectives were spelled out in the ISES document, others have been less clearly articulated, although they were no less important in the design of the

would emerge as "socially modern environments" for "a new type of life on an urban scale" (ISES 1972: 11, 76). Recognizing a need to "reorganize the 'strong feudal survivals'" represented by the agrotowns, the planning agency wanted to "eliminate whatever forms corresponded to the traditional neighborhood" (ISES 1972: 49, 58). The goal was to construct new towns of "unitary character" organized around public services (such as churches, schools, clinics, social centers). These were to be linked both internally and to other towns by means of a massive new road network (ISES 1972: passim). Once the towns were constructed and linked together, ISES planners expected the demand for public services and infrastructure to increase, as inhabitants of the new towns came to achieve "higher levels of well-being and civic and political maturity" (ISES 1972: 63).

In its "pilot experiment to vitalize a depressed interior zone," the ambitious ISES plans attempted a "courageous projection of the future" for the Belice Valley (ISES 1972: 10; ISES in Renna 1979: 104). The criteria for "locating the new towns followed plans for an industrial and commercial future" (Caldo 1974: 62). In the ISES statement, economic development was proclaimed as a major

Belice Valley settlements. The extent to which particular features of towns and houses were part of intentional design or merely reflect conventional expressions in the field of urban planning and architecture is difficult to determine. We can, however, point to the results of the reconstruction and determine consequences for the state planners, capital, and local inhabitants.

objective behind the reconstruction (ISES 1972: 18). And yet, the economic role envisioned for Sicily at the time of the ISES document was one based more on geography and changing European politics than on internal development associated with agriculture, industry, or tourism. Sicily was seen as the stepping stone between the strong economies of northern Europe and the underdeveloped economies of North Africa, and thus an important location in the effort to extend the European economy southward (ISES 1972: 19, 44). (The relation between Europe and Africa continues to be debated in the European Union today, with some members striving to expand toward Asia and North America, while other members want to focus economic expansion on markets in Eastern Europe and North Africa.)

The major new road network formed the centerpiece of the development plan, with one axis established between Palermo, Mazara del Vallo, and Sciacca, and another between Marsala, Corleone, and central Sicily (ISES 1972: 19). The planners envisioned this network "as the nucleus of industrial development" for the future Belice Valley (ISES 1972: 62). Ideally, products from Italy and Sicily would travel south to the port of Mazara for ships bound for the Tunisian port of Kelibia, while fish would travel north from the southern coast of Sicily to the rest of Italy (Caldo 1974: 131-132). As in mainstream Modernist proposals, the development plans for the Belice rested in

large measure on automotive transportation and circulation of commercial products.

ISES plans conformed to the classic expressions of Modernism in other ways as well. The planning agency tried to carry out a "large-scale experiment," relying primarily on prefabricated, industrial, modular construction materials and techniques. This approach was to hasten the process, "unifying" and "integrating" all the different stages of reconstruction more quickly (ISES 1972: 26-27). Furthermore, it was claimed that standardized typologies (**tipizzazione**) were both more convenient and less costly (ISES 1972: 64). For an area in which construction had been extremely labor intensive, with delivery of building materials by mule, motorbike, or three-wheeled mini-truck and cement carried by hand in buckets, this reliance on "prefabs" represented a dramatic transformation. Today the two kinds of construction techniques coexist in a contradictory awkwardness.

While the location and design of the historic agrotowns related directly to past and current patterns of land use, combining agriculture and settlement, the new towns made little reference to the surrounding agricultural landscape or the peasant past of the inhabitants. Renna claims planners promoted "new advanced standards of living" by "negating rural roots" (Renna 1979: 107). These new settlements were neither cosmopolitan nor agricultural; they were in fact little more than "imitations of real

cities" (Renna 1979: 108). The planning model was borrowed from Scandinavia and Britain. The Garden City, originally designed for habitation by middle-class urban clerks of northern Europe, served as the prototype orienting design of the new Belice towns (see Figure 14) (Renna 1979: 104-105). The Garden City model was based on single-family housing; each household was to be allotted 300 square meters, 200 square meters for a yard or garden, and 100 square meters for the house footprint.

Harvey discusses the way planners in the industrial West attempted to recreate "nature" of a sort in planning residential environments, following Frederick Law Olmstead's objective to "bring nature back into the living environments (quoted in Harvey 1985c: 180). Harvey (1985c: 180) writes: "The romantic reaction against the new industrial order ultimately led in the practice of urban design and planning to the attempt to counter in the sphere of consumption for what had been lost in the sphere of production." In Sicily's reconstruction the planners' approach to nature was necessarily more ambivalent. Although the stylistic dictates of Modernist design called for measures to counteract the urban alienation associated with industrialism, Sicily had never been industrialized. And, one of the objectives in planning the new settlements was to introduce lifestyles and patterns of residence associated with modern urbanity. Thus, there was an accommodation to nature expressed in the plans by the

presence of green spaces, but these spaces remained unspecified. Little geometric pine-tree shapes or green shading sufficed in the drawings. An architect involved in the planning said the actual green zones were of little concern to him.

The planning agency wanted to decrease population density and alleviate the overcrowding they perceived in the old towns of the Belice Valley. The new towns were to be enormous and expansive, open and empty--the antithesis of the agrotown. In its programmatic document ISES states clearly that "the territorial and urban designs [of the new towns] are organized first of all around voids (*vuoti*)" (ISES 1972: 58). The roads themselves in the new towns were at least six times as wide as the streets in the old towns. (for figures on dimensions in new towns see ISES 1972: 68-70). The image of urbanity as experienced in the historic cities of Sicily and Italy is absent in the Belice new towns, replaced with Modernist features of architectural expansion and dilation (Renna 1979: 107-108). The partial new towns usually house less than half of the old towns' total population but on areas of much larger dimension. For instance, the physically more compact and smaller old town of Calatafimi with a population of 8300 contrasts sharply with the partial new town of Sasi; although much more expansive physically, Sasi is intended for a population of only 2000. The changing population density of Gibellina further typifies the spatial contrast

between the new and old towns. In the old town, 6,500 inhabitants lived on two hectares (population density of 3250 per hectare or 2.47 acres), while in the new town 5000 live on fifteen hectares (population density of 300 per hectare) (Nicolin 1983).

In short, planners and politicians thought it important to propel residents of the Belice out of their past ways of living. New spaces associated with Modernist design and modernization ideology were substituted for old. Emphasis on consumption and residence took precedence over economic development concerns. The past was seen as inadequate and was to be eradicated by means of the new build environment.

6. RECONSTRUCTION AND THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF STATE POLICY

As seen in the discussion of Harvey, Foucault, and Castells (Chapter IV), political and economic factors exert primary influence in determining patterns of government intervention into the environment. While people tend to take the built environment in which they live for granted, state policy makers perceive its design and construction as opportunities to increase government power over local culture and practice and to facilitate the profit-making capacities of capital. Control over the built environment is a most convenient and effective way to express and realize the objectives of government and business. Planners and architects are employed by the state to carry

out this project, managing the built environment to influence the behavior of the citizenry and generate capital formation.

What did the government have in mind when considering the reconstruction of the Belice Valley? The state faced a huge financial burden in the reconstruction. One can assume that government policy makers wanted to direct investment, to target it to specific areas in order to achieve determined goals. Despite the lack of legislative organization for urban planning, despite the conflict of interests operating within and around it, the state had to formulate intentions, establish guidelines, and achieve results, whatever the orientation and shape they might take.¹²

With a combination of interviews with bureaucrats, planners, and architects, and research into the goals articulated in newspapers and programmatic statements, I have tried to understand the perceptions regarding the design of space and its influence on behavior. Policy makers, bureaucrats, planners, and architects are motivated by various considerations, some consistent, others conflicting. I would argue against an absolute point of view to instead contend that both the unconscious cultural

12. Reconstruction can go in a number of directions. While the Friuli reconstruction of the 1970s followed a more democratic, successfully organized route with effective local control and abundant government support and financing early on, the Campania reconstruction of the 1980s became a nightmare of corruption, disorganization, competing authority structures, and ill-conceived planning debacles.

repertoire of architects and their conscious professional training influence their attempts to design space to affect behavior in specific ways. Considerations of money, professional advancement, loyalty to the government, ambitions to improve the lives of others, and experimental curiosities may have all affected reconstruction planning. Keeping this multidimensional aspect of planning the built environment in mind, we can approach some general objectives behind its design in the Belice.

The state was able to transform the built environment to accommodate clear objectives vis-à-vis the Belice population. In the short term, the provision of housing dissipated political dissent and distracted national attention away from the earthquake aftermath. In the long term, capital from northern firms and underemployed local labor were absorbed in the vastly expensive public projects of highways, towns, and housing. Furthermore, the other long-term objectives guiding state policy--the disciplinary one of restricting cross-class political alliances and the profit generating one of fostering market penetration and dependence--were also fulfilled in the course of reconstructing the new towns.

Intervention into the process of social reproduction at many levels--most importantly, housing and commercial market dependence--has served as a primary means by which the government and capital have actually penetrated the daily lives of people living in western Sicily. Semi-

peripheral to capital's core areas, the Belice Valley was to continue serving the country as a center of social reproduction after the reconstruction.¹³ This role was in fact reiterated and reinforced in the design of new towns and houses. Despite the demands of protesters that productive investments precede those of consumption, the state instead focused efforts on housing, ignoring local economic development concerns altogether in the reconstruction projects. While ISES called for a vast network of highways to serve as the infrastructural basis for economic development, the only roads completed were those linked to new housing and new town areas.

State subsidized social reproduction benefitted capital and the government in at least five ways. First, it deflected attention of the population away from its opposition to the government. In addition to the emphasis on housing, long delays and bureaucratic complexity helped diffuse the volatile protests. Second, subsidizing social reproduction served as an outlet for reserve capital and labor. Third, it provided entry into the daily life of inhabitants, a necessary precondition for increasing government regulation of the masses. Fourth, it gave the state a means to hierarchically organize the population,

13. At the time of the earthquake, personal investment in housing rather than productive economic sectors was common throughout Italy (at 25% of all fixed capital assets). In the South, where other options for investment were negligible, the figure was as high as 50% (Angotti 1977: 10-11).

and in so doing influence individual actions and the social behavior of inhabitants. And fifth, it promoted the increasing penetration by the commercial market. Although the government's objectives vis-à-vis the reconstruction were various and multidimensional, their expression in features of the built environment can be seen as continuous and interconnected. I elaborate on these objectives as they oriented the subsidization of social reproduction by the state in the course of reconstruction.

Prior to the earthquake, between 55% and 80% of the inhabitants of the Belice Valley were largely semi-independent agriculturalists and land-poor peasants selling their labor on the local **piazza** in small rural towns (for figures see Caldo 1974: 104 and Gabaccia 1984: 6).¹⁴ Big families (**famiglie numerosi**) were the norm; men worked in agricultural fields surrounding the town while women involved themselves with home production and other domestic tasks in the narrow streets and courtyards. Market consumption was limited, participation in national culture largely undeveloped, and attainment of national standards of living rare.

14. Unlike most other towns in the western Sicilian interior, where labor was hired day by day, job by job, there was a tendency in Calatafimi to hire whole families to work an estate and share half of the products with the owner. While these families may have been associated with one estate for generations, occasionally day laborers (**iurnateri**) were hired to clear rocks from the land or to do specialized work such as trimming, pruning, or grafting of the grape vines (Spatafora 1977-78: 49-50).

The first objective of the government was to limit popular expression and quell the protest movement. Long delays and the "avalanche of plans" helped dissolve the powerful threat posed by the protesters. The attention of earthquake victims was diverted away from the hope of economic development and regional parity, toward the promise of new housing. After years, decades in some cases, of living in barracks, decent housing appeared to be the most for which many could hope. The protest movement in the Belice ground to a halt. Discouraged by years of disinterest and inaction on the part of the state, some protesters gave up the struggle to improve their situation out of sheer frustration. Others dropped their oppositional stance upon receiving housing or jobs in the construction sector; they felt vindicated in their struggle, at least partially, at least temporarily.

And, for a few years during the reconstruction, the market in consumer goods looked strong, appeasing those who had demanded an economic transformation. Financing from the state further increased employment in the construction industry. Many who left following the earthquake returned to new employment opportunities afforded by reconstruction. Independently, two informants estimated that 80% of the returnees came back for jobs while only 20% came back to take advantage of the contributions granted by the state. Commerce associated with construction as well as a greater number of jobs offered in the state bureaucracy all

bolstered the market economy for a time. New housing, debt obligations, and expanding consumer possibilities shifted the focus away from complaints about the state, capital, and the position of western Sicily in the Italian economy. Employment of some of the underemployed and clamorous Sicilians also served to dampen political discontent, no matter how insecure and temporary these jobs turned out to be.

Second, reconstruction represented huge public spending on infrastructure and social reproduction. The new towns were extravagant by local standards, extensive in size and well furnished in terms of services. An enormous investment of capital rendered this zone a primary "dumping ground" of overaccumulated financial resources. State spending increased in marginal areas as productive investments in industry remained centralized in the North-Center of Italy (Guarrasi 1981: 42). There was little attempt to use either local capital or local firms in the Belice reconstruction. (There was even some speculation as to whether local firms were well established enough to handle the huge and unexpected demands.) A few northern firms were hired to build in Sicily for many years; these lucrative contracts surely helped Italian business during the recession of the 1970s and provided employment for many highly skilled northern workers and managers. For example, the specific kind of tiles stipulated for the roofs of the new public housing projects were only found in Rovigo in

the northern province of the Veneto. The faucets stipulated for bathroom sinks came only from a neighboring supplier in the North. Even cement was imported from Africa and Asia since the fixed prices of Sicilian producers increased the costs too steeply there (Caldo 1974: 62).

Thirdly, by subsidizing social reproduction, the state penetrated the most private and intimate space of its citizens, the home. Regulating the design of housing, it could influence family size and the domestic use of space. The new housing was laid out in such a way as to influence consumption patterns and social relations, with implications regarding ideal family size. The **famiglie numerosi**, for instance, were discouraged by size, layout, and legal restrictions. In fact, building a wall or closing in a balcony for extra sleeping areas was illegal and perpetrators were fined. Kitchen placement followed standardized patterns; in reconstructed houses this room was tucked away far from areas of social activity. Separated off from a dining area, the kitchen was neither near the public area of the house nor near the street. In this way relations between the different sexes within the household and between neighbors within the quarter were altered in the new settlements. These issues are examined more fully in Chapter VII.

The use of house arrangement was an effective way to mark and distinguish social groups according to conditions

of their social reproduction. Different levels of consumption were made apparent by housing size and type. Patterns of movement through the public space of the town and the private space of the house as they are influenced by class, age, and gender were altered as well in the new towns. This process of organizing the population into socially defined groups on the basis of their new housing location, style, and condition is the subject of Chapter VI.

In the new housing, work areas were replaced by larger areas for leisure and display, namely, large living rooms and dining rooms. This rearrangement of the routines of domestic life and residence in the reconstructed housing necessitated higher levels of consumption of commercial goods from the world market. Lacking space for work and storage, home-based food preparation and wardrobe maintenance were impeded. New areas for entertaining and status exhibition required the new consumption of things with which to entertain and to exhibit. For instance, a standing bar in the living room of the new cooperative apartment compelled its inhabitants to stock it with bottles of imported brandy and scotch to offer guests. A polished wood shelving unit separating the dining area from the living room inspired the residents to buy and display a collection of ornamental ceramics from France.

By perpetuating dependence on the commercial market for labor and consumption goods, the state compounded the

economic vulnerability of the Belice population. Less able to rely on local opportunities, economic self-sufficiency and independence were diminished in the new towns. In the Sicilian context, the Garden City ideal of a household plot for cultivation was inadequate; more than twice the amount of land allocated was required to serve a household's base agricultural needs, (and then only with significant technological improvements) (Renna 1979: 108).

The state's emphasis on housing and consumption at the expense of economic development served to reinforce the status of western Sicily as a center for social reproduction, a place for people to be born, brought up and educated, and, after spending their productive years elsewhere, to which to return and grow old. Without development of the local productive economy, employment opportunities were limited to wage labor, most of it geographically distant from the new settlements and indeed from Sicily itself.

7. OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES TO INTENTIONS OF PLANNERS

Various factors have intervened to derail or redirect the goals behind urban planning in the Belice reconstruction. Although the state assumed almost complete authority over the initial planning and construction after the disaster, any clear-cut objectives of government policy have been complicated by structural obstacles associated with the political and economic organization of the area

and the complex nature of the reconstruction project. Different considerations, such as locational decisions, budgeting and expenditures, a vast structure of patronage networks, long-term delays, and citizens' protest actions, have compromised even the most clearly conceived goals and procedures set forth by the state.

In Sicily, for instance, state resources constitute the linchpin of extensive networks of patronage and clientelism linking all levels of private capital to government financing. The "maxi-trials" of the late 1980s and the **mani puliti** investigations (Operation Clean Hands) of the early 1990s demonstrate the enormous extent to which these networks fed off state spending in Sicily. Illegal kickbacks, schemes to siphon off public monies, and countless other nefarious arrangements embroiled and enriched state offices and private companies alike, implicating a great many of those with economic and institutional power in Italy (Sassoon 1995; Schneider and Schneider nd; Stille 1995; Chubb 1982). While this pervasive structure of corruption and evasion of any legal controls has characterized Sicilian politics and the allocation of state monies generally for some time, the earthquake reconstruction offered up even richer opportunities, given the extraordinary amount of money to be spent on real estate and construction. And, **mafiosi** and politicians were not the only groups to become rich in the course of the construction. The chain of beneficiaries was

long indeed--some informants argued that a whole class of nouveau riche emerged as people of peasant origins gained from manipulation of state monies.

Another impediment to the full realization of plans intended for the Belice has to do with the different perspectives represented by the important political parties in Italy. Different approaches to planning clearly bear the marks of political ideology; generally the Right has tended to view planning as a "direct challenge to private enterprise" (Mack Smith 1968: 533), while the Left has viewed it as a means by which the state can effectively address social problems (Geipel 1982: 132). More specifically, the plans for new towns reflect political differences, with right-wing planners and politicians emphasizing individual home ownership and the construction of churches, while left-wing planners and politicians have favored collective space and limited the number of churches (see, for example, Geipel 1982: 132, 162).

Beyond the background noise of corruption, clientelism, and politics, the role of those designing the settlements has also been affected in ways unforeseen and unmediated by state policy makers. For instance, politicians, planners, and architects must compromise and negotiate with each other as well as with the other specialists involved, such as geologists, engineers, and financiers. And like politicians, the planners and architects are trapped in systems of friendship,

recommendations, corruption and clientelism in the competition for jobs. Antonio De Bonis reminds us that they too, like everyone in the Mezzogiorno, need well-placed political "friends" and financial "saints" to secure work (De Bonis 1979: 139). Interviews with architects from the Belice have confirmed this; they frequently complained about the necessary and time-consuming wheeling-and-dealing that distracted them from design and building. In fact, one friend, trained as an architect, has chosen to work as a librarian in a sleepy town. Tucked away behind the stacks as it were, he acknowledges an extreme distaste for a system that gives him little choice between the corruption and kickback schemes of the architectural profession or unemployment.

Furthermore, architects rarely expect to receive the professionally sanctioned ten percent of the total project cost. They try to undercut one another by bidding down the price of the commission. One architect told me of accepting a mere two percent, justifying it with the obvious: two percent is better than no percent when jobs are few and competition fierce. As much as the job itself, he wanted access to the complex apparatus of bureaucracy and financing. Contributions could be manipulated in the course of reconstruction. A working architect was in a good position, he explained to me, to manage both the paperwork and the construction of a job. This position ensured advantageous access to lots, contributions, and

construction materials. Another way architects compensated for their lowered payment percentage was to tack on additional specifications halfway through the job, which they knew to be necessary from the very start; this allowed them to drive up the overall cost of the job, thus increasing the size of their commission.

A more immediate variable influencing intentions in the design of the built environment relates to the personal and social identities of the planners and architects. In designing the reconstruction projects in Sicily, these professionals were themselves influenced by their individual and class histories. A bourgeois urban planner from northern Italy might very possibly design a town that reflects the cultural expectations of his or her class and regional background, and not that of the future southern inhabitants. The radical architectural theorist, Agostino Renna, points out a related issue regarding the class identification of some of the Belice planners. He claims that the design of the Belice new towns, or the "modern clerk towns, are a formal expression of the ideology of the petite urban bourgeoisie...because planners have aspirations to belong to this class" (Renna 1979: 109).

While all the structural considerations outlined above serve to impede or redirect the intentions of urban planners and politicians, more important is the impact inhabitants themselves have on their built environment. This is especially so in a built environment as visible and

open to conscious critique as a reconstructed town. In terms of organized reaction by inhabitants, the protest movement discussed in Chapter III was definitely the most apparent, articulate, and unified form of response. And yet, disappointed by years of inaction and coopted by the hope for housing and for jobs in the construction sector, the protest movement was drained of content and power. Very few of its demands for economic development were addressed; ambitions for industry, agriculture, and small business were overlooked or redirected in favor of other issues. The many promises for industrial development (e.g., plants for metallurgy, cement production, and road construction), new irrigation technologies, a reduction of the distances between workers and workplaces, new commercial links to facilitate market exchange were never to materialize (Renna 1979: 103; Barbera 1982: 6-7).

Protestors agitated for the reconstruction of a productive economy; they received instead houses and towns built for consumption and social reproduction. As a result, the impetus for grassroots change, the enthusiasm for self-determination and improvement crumbled into resignation and self-interest. As Zukin has pointed out:

when the landscape shifts entirely to a service economy oriented towards consumption, even the social imagination--the ability to envision alternatives--is corrupted (Zukin 1991: 275).

Yet, although they may have been unable to envision alternatives, the inhabitants could and did influence their

built environment in the course of habitation. As we have seen, the state transforms the built environment with specific objectives in mind; while it may fulfill these objectives, this by no means implies a condition of unchanging permanence of the built environment. The environment is changed continuously, consciously and unconsciously, always through the agency of the inhabitants. Castells reminds us:

Everyday in every context, people acting individually or collectively, produce and reproduce the rules of their society, and translate them into their spatial expression and their institutional management. Because society is structured around conflicting positions which define alternative values and interests, so the production of space and cities will be, too. [Castells 1983: xvi]

Earthquake reconstruction presents a particular perspective on environmental transformation. The natural destruction of Belice towns and the subsequent interventions by the government represent the most radical and absolute kind of change of the built environment. A whole new apparatus of government legislation was built up according to economic and political objectives set forth by officials and politicians. Planners and architects had the responsibility to translate these objectives spatially. The transformation of the built environment was total--it was neither gradual nor within the historical parameters set by traditional settlement pattern and the cultural expectations of the inhabitants.

Acceptance could not possibly be taken for granted, nor would the reconstructed environment recall personal history or illustrate prerogative and self-determination. Instead, the inhabitants have scrutinized and reacted to the radical imposition of new spaces for living and new social conditions associated with these altered spaces. Every decision regarding design and construction was potentially perceived as the will of one person, office, or group over others. And, as we will see in the next two chapters (VI and VII), the communities inhabiting the new settlements reacted with a complex combination of criticism and approval, opposition and acceptance. In these chapters I discuss the role of the inhabitants in the new state-planned and state-financed built environments--their unplanned influence and the transformative power of their habitation.

CHAPTER VI
CEMENT WALLS AND SOCIAL DISTANCE:
THE CREATION OF **IL BRONX** IN WESTERN SICILY

1. INTRODUCTION

Segregation in housing powerfully reinforces class hierarchies by erecting symbolic and physical barriers, marking and delimiting the domestic space of different social groups. Town reconstruction after the 1968 earthquake introduced new patterns of residential segregation into western Sicily. While in the traditional agrotowns rich and poor lived side by side in houses distinguished by architectural style and size, in the new towns rich and poor live separated in different neighborhoods. Designed with uniform styles associated with Modernist architecture, these neighborhoods are nevertheless marked by social difference and hierarchical ranking. This new form of spatial distancing, even ghettoization, is examined here in terms of the increasing influence of the state and the related changes in class formation and status distinctions.

I return to the major themes in the analysis of earthquake reconstruction, this time with reference to the social and political attributes associated with residential location. Why did the Italian state build new settlements in design and form so radically different from the traditional agrotowns, and how have the inhabitants

responded to these new patterns of residence? This research model appears heavily weighted towards a top-down analysis, and in terms of the design and building regulations imposed by the state, such an approach is warranted. As outlined in earlier chapters (IV and V), the earthquake provided the state the rationale and the legal apparatus to intervene in all aspects of Sicilian life in the course of reconstructing their towns and homes. Government regulation of the settlements continued after they were built and inhabited.

Yet, more important than the institutional machinations of reconstruction, and more interesting to the anthropologist, are the attendant changes brought by resettlement. These include 1) the changing significance of the old towns with changing real estate values, 2) the new status distinctions associated with different neighborhoods, 3) the changing class stratification related to the departure of many poor laborers and the pouring in of state money, and, 4) the modified patterns of consumption, especially in terms of changing residential and domestic standards. In many ways, the homogenized consumption standards and increased financial dependence on the state have minimized class differences in the Belice Valley, yet at the same time the spatial separation of classes and the social distance between them have increased dramatically.

2. BACKGROUND: CLASS HETEROGENEITY IN TRADITIONAL AGROTOWNS

Historically, the agrotowns of western Sicily were associated with the latifundist economy and a feudal class structure. In response to depopulation, labor scarcity, and increasing competition for market control from northern Europe from the 1400s, intensive agriculture and dispersed settlement were replaced by extensive agriculture and agglomerated towns built by the feudal nobility with sponsorship of the Spanish crowns. The relocation of the peasantry from the countryside into physically concentrated settlements facilitated taxation and control by the local and foreign merchants and nobility (Smith 1976:248).

The agrotown was an exceedingly stable form of spatial organization; for five centuries this arrangement persisted as the dominant settlement pattern in western Sicily. Increasing integration into the capitalist world system and the Italian nation state in the 1800s and 1900s brought about major transformations in economic structure, political regimes, and patterns of class stratification (Schneider and Schneider 1976). Despite important breaks with the feudal mode of production, the physical arrangement of the agrotown remained largely intact, consistent with spatial patterns established in the 16th and 17th centuries.

This permanence in form derived from the ways in which the bourgeoisie reinforced feudal land use patterns. Consolidated land holdings and population concentrations

served the purposes of the major landowners; the labor force, trapped without other options, was compelled into dependence on the local landowners. Land-poor peasants lacked capital to buy and irrigate land or build housing away from the town center. Threats of banditry and malaria as well as the absence of services and infrastructure, such as good road networks in the countryside, further discouraged exodus from the towns (Blok 1969).¹ Finally, either because of these obstacles or in addition to them, a cultural ideology of urban civility (*civiltà*) as opposed to the natural, bestial, sexual danger associated with the countryside was pervasive in limiting residential opportunities outside of the towns (Davis 1973: 9, 10).

Moreover, the large-scale efforts by various political regimes failed to fundamentally alter the agrotown as a settlement pattern. The post-unification attempts to confiscate ecclesiastical estates and institute land reform accelerated the formation of the local bourgeoisie, a bourgeoisie which based its strength on traditional, feudal-based patterns of extensive agriculture, labor exploitation, and patronage politics. The residential arrangements of the agrotown fit neatly with this continued

1. In the Belice agrotowns, few resided outside the town centers. In Calatafimi, for example, 3.5% lived outside the town in 1951, and only 1.8% in 1961, and these figures were higher than for many other Belice towns. In Gibellina .5% lived outside the town center in 1951 and in 1961 no one did. In Partanna 1% lived outside the town in 1951 and .6% in 1961. In Poggioreale two people lived outside the town in 1951 and no one did in 1961 (Renna et. al. 1979: 210, 254, 304, 322).

reliance upon feudal productive relations. Thus, the emerging middle class had no reason to modify the existing settlement pattern as workers were conveniently concentrated and major land ownership was successfully monopolized (Blok 1969; Schneider and Schneider 1976). Likewise, Fascist projects for rural dispersion as well as the land reform attempts of the 1950s were either inadequate, poorly conceived, or corrupted by bourgeois maneuvering; they too did little to change the configuration of the agrotown.

In short, the dominant settlement pattern of the agrotown was preserved. Changing political regimes, economic transformations, and new patterns of class stratification did not alter the essential structure of these agglomerated settlements. Instead, the aristocracy of the feudal era and the emergent bourgeoisie of the post-unification period found it advantageous to retain and reinforce the traditional attributes of the agrotown.

As discussed in Chapter II, the focal point of settlement structure both in medieval and later feudal ones remained the main boulevard, or **corso**, anchored at one end by an ancient fort and at the other by a major church or town cemetery. Major institutional buildings and elite housing line the **corso**. In the older settlements the **corso** usually runs across a mountainous ridge, with streets and courtyards (**cortili**, pl. **cortile**, sing.) radiating off in spoke-like fashion. The medieval towns were altered during

the 16th and 17th centuries and thus contain a mix of styles and designs. The more recent towns, founded in the period of feudal expansion, are sited on valley floors. They are characterized by a grid layout and homogeneous design (Terrana 1987). Stylistic monotony and greater uniformity of building materials render them bland to the visitor's eye.

Calatafimi typifies the earlier, older type of town with its Arab influenced settlement structure and hilltop location. Although the name of the town recalls these Arab origins, some claim its roots are even older (Nicotra 1907). The oldest neighborhood, Sicciarà, has been identified by local scholars as the home of the sirens visited by Odysseus! Sicciarà, along with Burgu, another ancient neighborhood, forms the core of the old town, following the geological contours of the mountain ridge. The *corso* cuts down the center of this core, forking off halfway down to incorporate more recent growth. The expansion of the town in the 18th and 19th centuries spread down from the east-west mountain ridge into the sloping valleys, forming the shape of an "eagle" or "saddle." Postwar residential development has stretched farther down into these valley areas.

Studies conducted in other western Sicilian towns (e.g., Valussi 1968; Blok 1974; Schneider & Schneider 1976; Gabaccia 1984) and my research in Calatafimi permit generalization about residential patterns in pre-earthquake

Belice towns. Distinctions of status were marked in the physical form of the agrotown (see Gilmore 1980 regarding Spanish agrotowns). The basic pattern of class stratification between three distinct but at times fluid groups was expressed and reinforced primarily in housing types: "the types of Sicilian houses and their distribution roughly resembled the Sicilian class hierarchy" (Gabaccia 1984:21). Relative size, spatial divisions of productive and domestic activities, and different patterns of ornamentation were the variable characteristics of housing.

Housing of elites, the **case civili** of aristocrats and rentier capitalists, were based on urban architectural models and were often built on the major thoroughfares of town to maximize public visibility. Occasionally elegant house designs were borrowed from Florentine villas--one such building graces the **corso** of Sambuca di Sicilia.² Ornate doorways led into private **cortili** large enough to accommodate stables, carriages, storage rooms for animal feed and grains for household use. The **case civili** were spacious, ranging from ten to thirty rooms on two or three floors, and frequently comprising an entire block (Gabaccia 1984: 20). The **case civili** were relatively well illuminated.³ Since windows were taxed by the government

2. Jane and Peter Schneider, personal communication.

3. Not all the rooms were necessarily well lit in the houses of the rich. Domenico Campana (1986) describes the **stanza dello scirocco**, (the scirocco room) in his novel of the same name. During the intolerably hot winds from Africa the noble family would repair to this cool room: "it was a big place, white, unadorned, facing onto an interior

according to aperture size, they were considered a luxury in the Sicilian agrotowns. Often the big heavy wooden doors had smaller openings cut out of them; these functioned as windows though were not counted by the tax collector.⁴ Although rarely used by the absentee aristocracy, these houses served as the permanent residences of the rural bourgeoisie and constituted the symbolic expression of leisure, luxury, and conspicuous consumption.⁵

The residences of middle-class artisans, shopkeepers, and land-owning peasants (**burgisi**) were smaller, one or two story dwellings of five to nine rooms (see Figure 15). These houses comprised about 30% of the housing in the typical Belice town. As in the **case civili**, the ground floor was rarely used for domestic purposes; instead, it might have served as an artisanal workshop, a storefront, or for the sheltering animals and foodstuffs. A first floor parlor, or **salotto** functioned as a reception area for entertaining guests and displaying prestige goods (Gabaccia 1984:30). Similar to the elite residences, private

courtyard. Stone stairs lead to it. There are no windows, only a crack to give you a little light. It is kept secret, as a shelter. Here within the whitewashed cavern the family took refuge with the servants so that human nerves would not be devoured by the desert winds" (Campana 1986: 62).

4. Pasquale Marchese, personal communication.

5. For an eloquent description of daily life within these sumptuous villas, see the richly ethnographic accounts in Giovanni Verga's (1970 [1889]) **Mastro don Gesualdo** and Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's **Il Gattopardo** (1960 [1958]) or **The Leopard**.

domestic space was functionally and spatially separated in the middle-class house. Usually two bedrooms, either upstairs or in the back, were closed off from the more public areas of the **salotto** and storefront.

The third type of housing was for the poor. Agricultural day laborers lived in homes of one or two rooms which were dark and very small (see Figure 16). Size restricted the functional division of space in these homes: women socialized and did domestic work outside, beds were pushed back during the day or covered with a board to serve as a table. The sons slept with the animals or on a storage loft over the matrimonial bed while daughters slept with their parents.

Although houses were differentiated by size, light, the functional designation of spaces, and stylistic elaboration, their locational distribution was quite mixed. Class heterogeneity in residential location in the agrotown was observable both in terms of the **cortile** and the neighborhood. Although the elite **case civili** were most often located on or near the **corso**, tiny homes of the poor might have been sandwiched in between them on the same central corridor. A shoemaker's shopfront and tiny home might abut an elegant villa or the town hall. A peasant may have rented a room in the storage area of his employer's **cortile**. Or, the **casa civile** may have backed up to share the wall of a **cortile** inhabited by a family of shepherds. A **mezzadria** peasant family often lived near or

adjacent to the house of the landowning family for whom they worked (Spatafora 1977-78: 61). Children from rich families walked to school with children from poor families, and they played together in the courtyards. In short, "rich and poor, peasant and artisan, kin and nonkin lived in close physical proximity in Sicilian agrotowns. They could easily observe one another; they could mingle easily..." (Gabaccia 1984:26).

Town halls in Italy provide rich sources of detailed statistical information, including the national ISTAT census and local records such as birth and death registries and the **foglie di familie** (family records). Research based on town census data and family records confirmed this general housing typology and the presence of a heterogeneous mixture of classes in the pre-earthquake agrotown. A sample of 30% of both housing and population in the ten main neighborhoods of Calatafimi showed a great range of house size in all areas in 1971, before the reconstruction. The range of rooms per residence was between 1 and 9 in each neighborhood, while the average range was 1.3 to 6.6 rooms per residence. This shows that the rich lived near the poor, and larger houses bordered on smaller ones.

Various factors have influenced patterns of class heterogeneity found in the agrotowns. Historical origins and geographical characteristics were important in the formation of neighborhoods. Associational linkages that

crossed class lines, such as those based on kinship and patronage (J. Schneider 1969), were more influential in neighborhood composition than real estate considerations. Gabaccia, for instance, argues that the social mixture of neighborhoods and **cortili** resulted from kin-clustering in residence; the type and size of houses were less important in determining residential location than the preference for living near kin, friends, and patrons (Gabaccia 1984: 25, 34). The phenomenon of in vivo house inheritance facilitated this clustering. This practice of granting houses to offspring at marriage, frequently followed in Sicily, is common throughout southern Italy (see Davis 1973, 1976; Pitkin 1985).

The interests of all classes were served by the proximity offered in socially diverse neighborhoods. Patrons could establish cross-class client networks or contact potential employees, while their wives might hire a poor neighbor woman to bring eggs or water or launder the family's clothes (Gabaccia 1984: 38, 49). Importantly, the easy cross-class exchange of information, a valuable resource in clientelistic western Sicily, was facilitated by the residential heterogeneity of classes. Employment contracts, fictive kin ties, marriage arrangements, shared domestic work, gossip, and status maneuvering all occurred in the interaction between the different classes sharing the **cortile** or neighborhood. Furthermore, the preponderance of home ownership perpetuated the diversity

of neighborhoods just as it inhibited mobility of residence (Gabaccia 1984: 32).⁶

Class heterogeneity of residence was further reinforced by the actions, or more appropriately inactions, of the state and local governments. Before the earthquake, zoning regulations and building codes were either absent or inconsistently applied. The 1942 document regulating the hygienic standards of housing was the primary planning code in existence at the time of the earthquake (see Chapter V). The medical inspector of housing in some of the earthquake towns said the 1942 document was rarely consulted in drawing up new house plans (usually done by surveyors or master builders) and never used to regulate or restrict habitation of non-conforming housing. What in 1989 comprises a 100 page file in the town's technical office of an approved new house plan, might have been in 1961 a piece of scrap paper listing the home owner's name, the mayor's signature of approval, and perhaps in the more meticulous cases, even the street address! Thus, the haphazard mixture of classes within different neighborhoods came about as a result of kinship practices, considerations of domestic economy, homeownership and inheritance patterns, as well as from the conspicuous absence of an outside

6. The rates of owner-occupied housing in Italy at 33% are higher than the Western European norm. Contrast this to the low of Switzerland at 2% and the high of Finland at 45% (White 1984: 37).

authority ready to organize and implement standardized zoning codes.

Ten years later, after much reconstruction of the old town, patterns of class heterogeneity continue, with the range of between 1 and 9 rooms per residence remaining constant and a slight increase of the average range to 1.7 to 7.4 rooms per residence. This does not mean that neighborhoods underwent identical transformations with the investment of reconstruction funds, however. Two of the older neighborhoods have been slated for abandonment and demolition by the regional planning project. Reconstruction funds have been withheld from these areas so that here the use of house size as an indicator of class patterning is problematic. (The inclusion of these figures in the data skews the results to appear more heterogeneous than they would otherwise.) Nevertheless, until the regional government intervenes with this large-scale extraordinary project, the class heterogeneity of Calatafimi's older neighborhoods continues in modified form, as inhabitants use state contributions to reconstruct their houses in situ. And it continues in the new areas: in the construction of Calatafimi's new zone, Sasi, parents strive to provide a nearby lot or reserve a floor of their new house for their children and their families.

3. STATE HOUSING AND SEGREGATION: PRECEDENTS

The role of the government in providing housing to the populace varies widely between capitalist states. On the one hand, a full 25% of the French population lives in "social housing" while in the United States, where government is "unsympathetic to the notion that quality housing is a public responsibility," less than 2% of the population does (Schuman 1991: 249). Italy falls between these extremes. "Italy has had a relatively small public housing program" compared to its European neighbors (Fried 1973: 132). Within Italy there is much variation. While 15% of Milan's population lives in public housing (Lumley 1990: 263), the figures are much lower for the rural South.

While there was little in the way of a concerted, organized approach to planning in Italy, there were some early examples of public housing that indicate significant features of the Italian government's approach to the issue. For instance, Ferruccio Trabalzi points out that public housing in Rome in the early 1900s was little distinguished from private; public housing was considered neither inferior nor ugly vis-à-vis nearby private housing (Trabalzi 1991: 133). It was only later that styles of public and private housing began to diverge dramatically. It was in the postwar period that public housing became marked off from its private counterparts as "squalid agglomeration(s) of cement" (Trabalzi 1991: 144).

Immediately after WWII, the national government made public housing the responsibility of special agencies, which fell under the authority of the Ministry of Public Works (Ministero di Lavori Pubblici). The most important, INA-CASA (Istituto Nazionale Assicurazione or National Insurance Institute, 1949-1963) which became GESCAL (Gestione Case Lavoratori) in 1963, was established in response to the great demand for housing. Its purpose was to use large-scale construction of low-cost housing both to employ the great surplus of workers and to house the many homeless (Bardazzi: 29, 35; De Bonis 1979: 143).⁷ After operating for years as the "most notorious" of the corrupt and scandal-ridden public housing agencies, GESCAL was replaced in 1971 by the Istituto Autonomo per le Case Popolari (IACP) (Law n. 865) (Angotti 1977: 19).

The most significant public housing laws (Law n. 167 of 18 April 1962 and Law n. 865 of 1971) were touted as government's answer to the continuing demand for housing caused by war damage and rural to urban migration (Bastianini and Urbani 1975: 361). This legislation set forth planning instruments for local municipalities to expropriate land and build low-cost housing, public buildings, infrastructure, and urban improvements. Housing on public land (60-80%) was to be combined with housing on

7. The first president of the INA-CASA agency, A. Foschini, set the tenor of the agency. An ex-Fascist, he oversaw the redevelopment of Rome after the war, a policy cryptically named *sventramento cauto e dolce* ("gutting" or "clearance, cautious and sweet") (De Bonis 1979: 143).

private land (20-40%) (Bastianini and Urbani 1975: 362). Financial incentives for developers included early financing and low mortgage rates at 3% (Angotti 1977: 12). Regional agencies were established to organize reform; arresting the growth of shantytowns, poor housing conditions, excessive densities per room, and immigrant housing problems became the responsibility of these agencies (Angotti 1977: 19). Southern regions received proportionally more public housing money from the government in exchange for support of the then powerful Christian Democratic Party (Angotti 1977: xvii, 20).

Together these laws had the potential to create complete and successful towns and provide adequate housing (Angotti 1977: 18; Forte and Da Venezia 1988: 13-40). But, as Paul Ginsborg points out, "housing proved to be a key area where reform foundered on the rocks of entrenched interest and state practice" (Ginsborg 1990: 328). Most analysts agree that the legislation, proclaimed at the time as the solution to Italy's housing problems, did not in fact provide cheap housing to the poor (Forte and Da Venezia 1988; Angotti 1977). The failure of the public housing laws took on a particularly insidious form. While it appeared to unions and reformers that the long fight for fair and accessible housing for the poor had been won, in fact the laws were so hopelessly complex as to defy implementation (Ginsborg 1990: 329-330). Because of inadequate financing, poor organization, delayed

implementation, and political maneuvering, the middle class emerged as the primary beneficiary of this program of state intervention (Ginatempo and Cammarota 1977: 117; Angotti 1977: 56; Trabalzi 1991: 154; Gregotti 1968: 64).

Furthermore, the inadequate results of housing legislation represented a "significant failure" for the reformist Left in national politics, damaging its efforts to promote large-scale planning and far-reaching housing policies (Angotti 1977: 45).

In Calatafimi prior to the earthquake there were three precedents for housing that was financed, designed, and constructed by the government. These three housing projects were built for different occupational groups on the outskirts, distant both from the town and from each other. They comprised only a tiny fraction (about 35 houses) of all housing in the town. Differentiated from one another, they also departed from the traditional architecture of the agrotown in terms of size and style. Furthermore, their locations, all built **in campagna**, the uninhabited countryside surrounding the town, were unusual by the residential standards of local people at the time of their construction.

The first project was of **case coloniche**, rural houses built in the 1950s for land-owning peasant families. The form of these two-story buildings reflected a functional orientation of design with a ground floor reserved for storage of foodstuffs and machinery and a first floor for

residence. The second government housing project was built in the early 1960s for landless agricultural workers; these single-story prefabs were small (50-60 square meters) and shabby compared to surrounding housing. Little boxes of grey cement, the untended structures seem out of place, more like garages than houses. The third kind of housing was built for middle-class state employees. Larger than the other types of state housing (100 square meters), these houses followed a modified Garden City design with a pocket of green area at both front and back. Designed by the architect famous for his acknowledgement of vernacular forms, Giuseppe Samonà, this housing adopted the agrotown model of lining up houses, a **schiera**. An elementary school was built nearby for all the town children.

These three housing types, planned and financed by the government, introduced new patterns of urban growth. As all were built **in campagna**, the desire to inhabit them was fraught with ambivalence. One informant, the seventy-five year old wife of a school teacher, told me that she had resisted the move to the state-employee housing because she worried about her children growing up so far from the activities of the town. But she moved there, she said, because the house was bigger and better equipped than anything they could find or afford in town. Her worries of distance and separation were quickly dispelled as the town grew up to surround the once isolated housing units.

The housing projects were all built less than a kilometer from the town center, and because the state built infrastructure of roads and water and electricity lines, these clusters of public housing served as magnets for private housing development on the periphery of the town. In fact, all three housing types are now integrated into neighborhoods spatially contiguous to the town center. Thus, state planning of these housing estates served as a catalyst in urban development. Like the conventional growth patterns of both the feudal agrotown and the industrial city, development radiated out from a center into an ever-expanding periphery (White 1984).

These early examples of public housing illustrate the beginnings of residential segregation by class in the rural towns of western Sicily. Eligibility to inhabit the different housing projects was restricted to specific class and occupational groups. Even though the surrounding neighborhoods have evolved into relatively heterogeneous mixings of classes and the elementary school brings together children from all strata, the housing projects themselves remain associated solely with those classes that fill criteria established by the state.

Residential segregation by class evolved in full form after the earthquake. The first effective instance of spatial segregation of classes in different residential areas occurred immediately after the disaster with the construction of prefabricated villages, or the **baraccopoli**

(see Figure 4). The barracks towns in the Belice were built on a total of 360 hectares (889 acres) to house 50,000 earthquake victims (Caldo 1974: 60). In the towns that were completely devastated, a number of **baraccopoli** were built, scattered miles apart from each other. Although it was more expensive to build and service settlements scattered in this way, some argue that the state used dispersal in an attempt to discourage a collective response, social discontent, and political upheaval (Nicolin 1983). In towns where damage was partial, only one or two **baraccopoli** were built. Each barrack was small at 25-35 square meters and made of aluminum (some were discarded American airplane hangers) or wood.

The approximately 550 prefabs in Calatafimi were grouped as one **baraccopolo** on the eastern edge of town, at the base of the town's hill. Access to the area is difficult, still today, as one must drive through the oldest neighborhoods, out of town, and around to the other side of the mountain's base on narrow, rocky roads. Not all the barracks were inhabited beyond the time of immediate danger (the 1981 census lists 49 inhabited barracks with a population of 178).⁸ The richer landowners

8. Once the danger of aftershocks had passed, the majority of the barracks were inhabited by widowed women, though there were seven barracks with more than six inhabitants. Ian Davis, in **Shelter After Disaster** (1978), notes that emergency shelter is rarely fully occupied and that use declines markedly over the months following the disaster.

tried to avoid the barracks altogether by relocating to their country houses, and others slept in train cars at the local station.

The reluctance of my informants, friends, and acquaintances to discuss their experiences in the Calatafimi **baraccopolo** surprised and frustrated me until I understood the identity and status of those in the barracks, the so-called **baraccati**. Informants' statements reveal negative stereotypes associated with the **baraccati**. For example, a young professional woman said: "A common way of saying someone is dirty, uneducated, uncivilized is to say 'you're like one of the **baraccati**.'" She went on to explain that only the very poorest remained in the barracks because they wanted to take advantage of free rent, electricity, and water. This critique, linked to the idea of **assistenzialismo**, or aid-dependency syndrome, is commonly directed at the poor in both the national media and popular discussion. Another informant said sarcastically, "the **baraccati** are without culture; they don't know enough to go to the (public clinic) when they get tetanus. But, in fact, they don't need the tetanus booster because they have the antibodies to fight it living as they do amid garbage." From another more charitable perspective, the **baraccati** are seen as "hostages" of the state, trapped into a cycle of welfare dependency.

From these statements it is clear that new patterns of class evaluation, linked to residential location and house

type, emerged in the aftermath of the earthquake with regard to the emergency measures of barracks housing. Those without second houses (in which they could relocate to wait out the aftershocks and period of repair) had to depend on the state for shelter and services. They were considered unfortunate. (Years later an informant recalled camping out with her family in the trains at the local railway station to avoid just such a stigma.) If the **baraccati** remained in the barracks after the real danger of earthquakes and damage had passed, they were judged even more harshly as cheap and opportunistic.

4. NEW TOWNS AND SPATIAL SEGREGATION

The reconstruction of the fourteen most damaged towns in the Belice is infamous throughout Italy for its long delays, for the massive amounts of state money spent,⁹ and for the large-scale corruption which occurred throughout all phases of reconstruction. In addition, much money was wasted on the poorly organized and inadequately regulated system of contributions. One informant was involved in a speculative scheme from which he earned 90 million lire for nothing more than the legal buying and selling of an earthquake-damaged house which had state contributions for

9. Although the original estimate of the reconstruction costs was 329,890 million lire (Caldo 1974:134), as of January 1987, on the 19th anniversary of the earthquake, 1,307 billion lire had already been spent, with another 231 billion approved for future construction, and another 1,111 billion in requests still pending (Messina 1984).

reconstruction attached. He assured me that his actions were by no means atypical, and others from the technical offices of three Belice towns confirmed this claim.

Despite the huge amount of money used for reconstruction, little was invested in changing the productive base of the economy. Thousands lost jobs with the decline of agriculture, while reform plans of the Left, such as reskilling and new investment in production, remained only plans. Instead, construction, a temporary and ultimately unproductive investment, received the bulk of the money actually spent. Ironically, rather than alleviate economic dependence on state subsidies, new investments in the secondary sector served to increase dependency on government assistance in the Sicilian interior. An older informant, a patriarch with extensive ties to the economy and politics of reconstruction through his large family network, took me aside to "set me straight" on the earthquake and its effects on the region.

Since the earthquake the economy has **saltata in aria** (exploded). It is based exclusively on the construction industry. Agriculture is caput, and building is bound to end soon as well, since the inhabitants only **mangiano le miglie**, or eat up the vast amount of money. No, the future does not look bright for us. Too bad Sicily isn't like the United States or Germany, where those who want to work can, and the corrupt go to jail.

Tabula rasa construction was the method used in new and partially-new towns. Consistent with postwar

rebuilding in general, this approach reflected the assumption of unlimited growth that characterized urban development in the latter part of this century. In marked contrast to the boundaries--both physical and intellectual--imposed by history and the continuity of traditional settlement, **tabula rasa** development represents a "new beginning, or isolated object, of infinitely and indifferently divisible space" (Gregotti 1984: 2). It is a new unit that possesses moveable boundaries arbitrarily imposed by state planners, unified infrastructure, and the capacity to be managed in shape and structure by non-inhabitants from afar. The **tabula rasa** approach was used in the Belice, both in cases where it was necessary and where it was not. It was used in those towns totally rebuilt on greenfield sites such as Montevago, Gibellina, and Poggioreale, and also in those towns that built only partial new sections such as Salemi, Camporeale, Vita, Partanna, Santa Ninfa, and Sambuca di Sicilia (see for example, Figure 17). In all of the towns that required only partial reconstruction there was bitter debate regarding the placement and structure of the new town zones. Some argued that the community needed to maintain continuity and consistency with the previously established patterns of growth. They promoted a **macchia d'olio** approach, a slow, even expansion at all sides. Others argued that the economic opportunities and emotional regeneration offered by a confined separated settlement of

the **tabula rasa** approach outweighed the benefits of continuity. It does not appear that the planning agency, ISES, ever acknowledged this debate or entertained any options besides that of **tabula rasa** reconstruction.

The vast and disciplined space of both the new and partial new towns arrests the visitor familiar with the common pattern of unregulated settlement development and expansion in western Sicily. Instead of the haphazard mixture of large and small houses, of shops and courtyards, all built with little reference to zoning or building codes, there stand functionally differentiated spaces arrayed in stark geometric patterns, linked by broad boulevards. Empty of the pedestrian street life and stop-and-go traffic of the old towns, the new towns appear vacant and architecturally ostentatious with well-defined areas of different housing types, commercial blocks, and public buildings.

Sasi is an area of **tabula rasa** construction, organized into new neighborhood groupings based on housing type and class status. Both here, and in Calatafimi more generally, a new pattern of residential segregation of classes through the state distribution of housing has emerged. State regulation differs in terms of ownership rights, lot placement, and house form, size, style, and structure. Three basic situations reflect different forms of state financing. Those without property at the time of the earthquake were granted rights to one kind of public

housing, the **case popolari** (public housing, literally popular houses). Those who owned property but whose houses were too small to reconstruct according to the new zoning and building codes for the old town were granted lots and contributions (**contributi**) for private houses in Sasi. Those with large enough houses to fulfill the newly imposed state standards were granted financing to reconstruct in situ in the old town. In this way class differences were given new spatial and physical expression in both the old and new towns. Social distinctions between classes were reinforced and reframed in new, more pervasive categorizations. The earlier patterns of inter-class contact in the old towns have been precluded in the new towns by distance and spatial obstacles that inhibit social contact.

Dependence on state entitlements is evident on many levels; here I focus on the issue of state intervention in housing following the earthquake. Segregation of space and housing type corresponds to varied expressions of state control over people's domestic lives. The state intervenes most directly into lives of those without property. These people, with neither property nor political clout in the town hall, have been excluded from the high prestige areas in the old town. Their housing options are limited to the low status areas in Sasi and other new towns. By accepting popular housing, they increase both their dependence on the state and the ability of the state to regulate their lives.

To be eligible for public housing they must fall within a specific income level. Once they move into state housing projects they must check in to state offices monthly to pay rent and arrange financing. They must register changes in family composition and file an application if they wish to alter their house in any way. Furthermore, officials of the public housing can visit the projects to confirm the continuing eligibility and condition of the inhabitants. Project residents, in short, are always subject to state control in terms of rent, tenancy, modifications, and demographic regulation.

The exaggerated level of state involvement in the lives of inhabitants of public housing contrasts sharply to state involvement with other Sasi residents. These others enjoy beneficial contributions from the government while remaining relatively independent of its administrative management of family life and the condition of housing. For instance, those with government jobs are eligible for residence in cooperatives. They can organize the cooperative's membership and decide on the architect to design the housing. They must pay rent and mortgage payments to the state, but their eventual ownership of the home gives them the freedom to modify it, and change the composition of their household autonomously of state control.

Those with property at the time of the earthquake who enjoyed well-placed contacts within the local bureaucracy

were able to get adequate financial contributions to build in Sasi or rebuild in high prestige areas of the old town. Once their houses are built, owners of private dwellings are even more free of state intervention. While they must apply to the government to receive building permits and contributions, after that they have little to do with the state offices regarding their residence and domestic life. They consider themselves privileged, an image projected on them by others as well.

As anticipated in Chapter IV, people on the lower levels of the class hierarchy are engaged in a more permanent relationship of continued dependence on the state. Propertyless at the time of the earthquake, the residents of popular housing are most closely linked to the government agencies for housing and welfare. Those who have state jobs and residence in a cooperative are temporarily dependent on the state, with eventual closure built into the relationship. Property holders have a much more limited relationship to the state; it ends after the receipt of **contributi** and the construction of the house, approved according to the building codes.

The reactions of Calatafimi residents illustrate the complex and often contradictory responses inhabitants have to the new towns. A good friend, Gioacchino, is an older man full of great dignity, generous hospitality, and detailed knowledge which fortunately he enjoys sharing with us. Local Sicilian culture and history are his special

interests. He describes with great accuracy the comparative benefits of ancient and modern sausage making, from the birth of the pig to the best methods for cooking the delicacy. He remembers the mirror-like shine on the boot of the town's biggest absentee landlord and how this imposing man's house on the **corso** was opened and cleaned for the noble family's periodic visits from Palermo in the 1920s and 1930s. Gioacchino can specify exactly how much landowners and employers contribute to the health benefits of their employees, as well as recount the family history three generations back of each worker on his grape-growing estate. Despite his encyclopedic knowledge and love of pedagogy, Gioacchino will rarely discuss Sasi.

He, along with many elder people in town, refuse to acknowledge Sasi as a new part of town. They continue to regard the area as agricultural territory, and ridicule people for moving to an area so inappropriate for residence. The area is all wrong for country houses--its lowland location receives none of the refreshing cool winds of summer but all the dampness and fog of the winter. As a settlement, it is isolated and awkwardly distant from the public life of the still-thriving old center. The new town is dismissed and disparaged as merely the **dormitorio** (dormitory) of the old town; it is too **distacco** (detached) to be taken seriously as a viable neighborhood or community.

And yet, as of 1992 a tenth of Calatafimi's population (800 people) consider Sasi their permanent residence, and the numbers continue to grow. It is no longer exclusively an area of agriculture and animal husbandry. It is a new residential zone that has transformed the shape of the settlement. Calatafimi is now like a lopsided barbell; two large settlements--one compact and crowded, the other vast and empty--a mile apart and linked only by a thin ribbon of new superhighway. Inhabitants perceive a new division between new town and old town. This split, found in most reconstructed towns, reflects and replicates other dichotomies new to the Belice. Most significantly, there have emerged important differences of generation, class, and gender regarding residential desires and expectations. Sasi is a residential zone populated mostly by the young, those who feel more mobile and thus less cut off from the social life of the old town. It is an area of modest means for those who cannot afford the higher prices of renovating the more expensive real estate in town. It is for those who want to build houses larger than those permitted by newly enforced zoning codes for the old town. And, it is primarily for those who need or want to take advantage of state-financed public housing or cooperatives.

Yet, the new towns are disparaged. Despite the early recognition by planners that they ran the risk of becoming "neighborhood-dormitories," this is just what they have become (ISES 1972:74). Gioacchino's perspective on Sasi

reiterates the general response of many to the new towns which, in the late 1980s, were repeatedly referred to as "dormitories."¹⁰ People from Calatafimi often note, "Sasi empties out at 8 AM and refills at night." All complain about the lack of infrastructure and services in the new zones. For instance, there is but one bar and a small shop in Sasi. This is a problem common to all the Belice new towns; driving through Gibellina, for example, one is hard pressed to find a grocery store. The residents of Sasi go to the old town to shop, vote, get counted for the census, work, drink coffee and exchange information in bars and **piazze**. They drive to the old town to take part in the pedestrian and motorized **passeggiata** (promenade) down the central **corso**. A middle-aged peasant told me: "it's like there's a little Calatafimi and a big Calatafimi, forever apart."

Criticism of the Belice new towns also has an emotive tone. A young professional woman said of Sasi, "the houses there exude a coldness, while these here in town exude a sense of warmth, they embrace you. It is the narrowness of

10. This tendency of the new towns to emerge as little more than "dormitory suburbs" is not limited to the Modernist designs of the Belice. Characteristic of many new town developments throughout Western Europe and North America is the creation of "single-purpose" settlements. Housing is provided, but there is a notable absence of places for work, shopping, social and political life. Cars are important for these dormitory areas, and the housing estates are frequently surrounded by parking areas. (For a good description of these characteristic features of modern urbanism in Ricardo Bofill's Abraxas development in France see to Schuman [1991: 237].)

the streets here that gives a sense of sociability." She, like many others who decry the new towns, is eligible to receive a lot in Sasi. She has done nothing with it, but plans to eventually build a house for her daughter, who was at this time only six weeks old.

Old people are especially unhappy about Sasi. An elderly woman refused to move with her daughter's family to the new town because it was "a big mistake, a dead town." She says the new town was "born under a bad star." She corroborated Giacchino's impression of Sasi as trapped in lowland heat in the summer and in cold dampness in the winter.¹¹ The old lady was adamant in her desire to stay near her neighbors, in the familiar spaces of her youth, where she knows the shopkeepers and the easiest ways to get around. Although a mere mile-and-a-half apart, she and her daughter both reflect on the daughter's move to Sasi and the mother's refusal to join her as a major act of separation and betrayal--each of the other. The general consensus is of strong dissatisfaction with both the new sections of old towns and the completely rebuilt towns.

11. The figures support this impression of altitudinal difference. In Calatafimi, the old town is 330 meters above sea level, while Sasi is 200. In Gibellina the old town was 378 meters above sea level, while Gibellina Nuova is 250. Salemi's old town center rests at 410 meters above sea level, and its new area is 320 meters above sea level. Even in the towns in which the old and new areas are linked, such as Vita and Santa Ninfa, the difference in altitude between old and new is 75 meters and 65 meters respectively. These figures are consistent with those from other towns.

The youth of Calatafimi feel more attached to the old town as well. Interviews at a local bar frequented by the young revealed that most "live" in Sasi, but spend all their time in the old town. The new town, they claimed, "has no **anima** (soul), it's too cold." Some are more independent of their parents with motorbikes and motorcycles, while others need constant chauffeuring between the two areas. They commute back and forth to town to visit with friends and family, attend public events, and participate in the **passeggiata**. A good number of children go into town each morning to attend elementary school there and return to Sasi each evening with their parents.

There are two elementary schools in Calatafimi--one in the old town, one in Sasi. Students may attend either one. A high percentage of those parents interviewed (7 of 10) about this assured me that the two schools were equivalent. And yet, many of these same informants send their children to school in the old town, even if they lived in Sasi. When asked why they drove their children miles away to school each day, despite the supposed similiar quality of education available in Sasi, employed parents explained that it was easier for grandparents to retrieve and care for the children after school. Others without formal employment said that they were in town so often anyway, it was little trouble to taxi their children back and forth.

In short, my questions regarding local schools revealed contradictory opinions. Discussion with an astute

local observer and a school administrator confirmed the results of my small sample and provided insight into apparent inconsistencies. They explained that like everything else associated with the old town, the elementary school there enjoys more esteem than the one in Sasi. Many Sasi families, especially those with mothers employed professionally, prefer to send their children to the more prestigious older school, despite the active encouragement from the superintendent. He often reminds parents that the Sasi school is newer and better equipped than the old one. Because the student body is self-selected it is difficult to compare the quality of the two institutions. Generally, the children of the more educated Sasi residents attend school in the old town, while students of less educated Sasi residents are more likely to attend the Sasi school.

The new high school in Sasi for accounting and engineering was recently opened but is still not well attended. (High schools are specialized in Italy, where students commute to the school most appropriate to their individual qualifications and career goals.) Two accounting students from Calatafimi did utilize the new school, finding it more convenient than the high schools in other towns; they could attend classes and keep their part-time jobs in town. Students enrolled in the high school of the adjacent town of Alcamo tended to be full-time students and expected to continue their studies in college.

I only met one informant who liked the new town unconditionally. Experience as a migrant worker in Australia may have influenced this informant's settlement preferences. His views are known, and he is considered sort of a crank regarding this issue by his friends and family. He looked forward to moving to Sasi in order to avoid the close knit conditions of the agrotown. He said: "it will be great to be there so I don't have to live anymore with my wife's parents, in the same building, right here below them." He elaborated: "They're wonderful people, but I don't want them coming downstairs after every fight we have. I don't want to have to lower my voice so that they won't come down." (Did his wife resist the move to Sasi, fearing the loss of the protective involvement of her parents in their domestic life?)

Others, who did not suffer earthquake damage to their houses, and failed to qualify for contributions, occasionally expressed envy of those with new houses in Sasi. One struggling retired couple living on a state pension complained: "they've built themselves some really nice **palazzi** down there, with good tiles in the kitchens and lots of bedrooms." They admired the elegance of the new houses, but would not consider leaving the old town themselves. They needed to be in the thick of things to maintain their home-based artisanal business. And not

owning a car, they doubted they could cope with the daily commute to town for shopping, business, and social life.¹²

Although current evaluations of Sasi and other new settlements are negative, some think the future will be different as the next generation moves to Sasi and grows up there. As a local government official put it: "Sasi is good for the young because just starting out they can't afford a place, big enough or nice enough, in town." They can buy a lot in Sasi for half the cost of a lot in town, and the house is "a gift" from the state.

The age distinction is apparent in Santa Ninfa too, where the new town is larger, more populated, and more spatially integrated with the old than Sasi is with the rest of Calatafimi. Here the youth take their *passeggiata* in cars cruising the wide boulevards of the new town, while the middle-aged and elderly stroll down the *corso* of the reconstructed old town. For this reason, Santa Ninfa is considered more modern and more "American" by Sicilians. Inhabitants are more satisfied with Santa Ninfa's reconstruction, mainly for this reason. In Calatafimi and the other reconstructed towns the linkages between the old and new are not as well established, nor perhaps will they ever be.

12. Neighbors living nearby this couple pitied them for failing to obtain *contributi*, however small; they were seen as lacking *furberia* (cleverness) in dealing with the authorities and the large financial machine of earthquake reconstruction.

5. THE CREATION OF GHETTOS AND NEW SOCIAL STEREOTYPES

While Calatafimi residents disparage Sasi as a whole, they further differentiate the inhabitants of the various types of housing within the new settlement (see Figure 18). The inter-class patronage and social networks of the heterogeneous old town are absent in the segregated new towns. Cross-class relations of dependence and interchange have been replaced by new patterns of social distance reinforced by a range of stereotypes associated with the different kinds of housing.

The planning agency had high expectations for the earliest type of housing built in the new towns. These were the **case popolari** built for the most needy. The ISES document states that "it was very important that these housing developments exercise a promotional action, that they introduce building typologies appropriately inspired for a new system of living and habitation, that they set a model for successive building interventions of the...private houses" (1972:74). Ironically, the **case popolari** did introduce new building typologies and promote a new system of living--one based on divisive class segregation.

The **case popolari** were built for those who owned nothing at the time of the earthquake, mostly renting or living with extended family members. The new housing, built for such persons in the reconstructed settlements, was administered first by the national public housing

agency, GESCAL, and later by IACP. Although linked closely to ISES and the Ispettorato for the Belice projects, the housing agency is responsible for the public housing of all of Italy's poor, not just the victims of natural disaster. This administrative arrangement, though subtle in the overall picture of state aid, perpetuates distinctions between those in the **case popolari** and those in other types of new town housing. The former are seen as permanent wards of the state in any circumstance while the latter are viewed instead as victims of a one-time catastrophe, helped by the state only in an extraordinary circumstance.

The **case popolari** in many of the Belice towns are commonly referred to as **il Bronx** (the Bronx), the world's worst ghetto according to Sicilians. The **case popolari** residents are subject to a negative stereotype, considered an exposed, immoral, lazy, sexually uncontrolled underclass. This image, first established in regard to the **baraccati**, was elaborated upon and extended to the residents of the **case popolari**. One informant explained: "first they were in one place (the barracks), then they were moved, but they are still in the same place." The following comments were made by predominantly young, educated clerks and professionals in response to general questions about the residents of the **case popolari**.

Those in **case popolari** are the miserable, the proto-earthquaked. I mean miserable in the brain, not in the pocket. They are immoral people who don't pay taxes,

who fake their poverty, and complain of not having anything when they really do have something.

The **case popolari** are for the sewage of Calatafimi; the class of people living there have made it a dump.

Life's certainly different in the **case popolari**. There is more collective life, more life shared in common, less privacy. There's no respect. It's not just the noise level that's really high, but those that live there are the type of people to drop in right at 12:30, right at lunch time, for a coffee, without warning, without being invited. They don't follow the rules of public behavior: neighbors play music at midnight and think nothing of it.

Those in the **case popolari** are marginals, prostitutes, dishonest types who came from outside Calatafimi and stayed in the barracks until the **case popolari** were ready...No, they aren't really prostitutes, but there is a lot of changing of mates, and babies born out of wedlock. You can tell it's different there, the kids all wear dirty clothes and they're always sick. Yes, yes, I do have a friend in the **case popolari**, but he isn't like the rest of them.

As evident from the statements above, the residents of the **case popolari** were maligned frequently and vigorously. As soon as people, young and old, left, right and center, learned of my interest in the new town, the discourse on the underclass living in **il Bronx** would emerge in a spasm of disgust and rejection. In the past some of these disparaging stereotypes were used to categorize land-poor peasants--especially the stereotype of promiscuous residential and sexual behavior (Gabaccia 1984:44-48). But, the stereotypes of the past were directed at a majority occupational group, not an "underclass" minority residential group, and they were, in any case, tempered by

the continuous contact and interchange between the different occupational strata residing in adjoining houses and neighborhoods. Today's stigma is much more totalizing.

The two housing cooperatives of Sasi are considered more desirable than the **case popolari** but less so than private housing. Those who live in them are state employees and their access to this housing type indicates they are without property of their own. Because of this, their residence in the cooperative is often interpreted as an absence of other options. They are dependent on the state for both their jobs and their residential opportunities. Eligibility requirements for the cooperatives include secure employment and steady income. The mortgage arrangement affords exceptionally low interest rates (5-6%) and allows residents to buy the apartments from the government over the long term.

Inhabitants prefer this housing to public housing because "they can choose their neighbors; there is less squabbling between neighbors because of this." An informant, a middle-aged professional married to a state clerk, was one of the original inhabitants of the cooperatives. He explained:

Cooperative members want more privacy, more space, and they have it. They have more autonomy, an autonomy shared only with the other residents of the cooperative. I, for example, have one-tenth autonomy; my autonomy is shared by the other nine families living here. All of us have our autonomy!

The private housing of Sasi is most desirable, yet because it is largely unfinished and thus uninhabited, particular stereotypes associated with its inhabitants have only begun to emerge. Private housing is preferred over other housing options because of the relative control residents have over the design of their homes. "It is ours," said one informant, explaining her satisfaction with her new house designed by an architect to her family's own specifications within the rules of the building codes. She guided me through the new house, pointing out the personal touches and unique architectural details. Never would she consider residing in the "ugly and prison-like" **case popolari** designed and built wholly by the state, nor would she enjoy having to compromise with other members as to house style, design, and cost as required by the cooperatives.

As nearly all public events and social life occur in the old town, there is little interaction between the inhabitants of Sasi as neighbors. What social exchange that does occur happens between those living in houses in the same area and of the same type. Both parents and children of Sasi told me that rarely do adults socialize or children play outside the immediate range of their neighbors in the same group of housing. One adult joked: "children from the cooperatives and private houses don't play with children of the **case popolari**, since one of their toys might be stolen." This indicates not only the status

distinctions and lack of social contact between residents of the different housing types, but also a general mistrust of those in the **case popolari**. They are seen as poor and inclined to thievery. Even the new elementary school, an institution with the potential to bring together children and parents of Sasi's different housing areas, was affected by the general disparagement of the new town and the logistical requirements of resident professionals juggling work and childcare.

With the construction of the new towns, the distinguishing criteria of social groups by productive and occupational positions has been qualitatively altered. Socioeconomic groups are newly identified and categorized by consumption and residential standards. The new forms of social distinction and class divisions are more pervasive and more permanent. With the general increase in consumption standards, inhabitants can continually elaborate upon residence type and location and in so doing reinforce the new stereotypes and increase the social distance between the different groups.

6. INTERPRETATION: SPATIAL SEGREGATION AND DISCIPLINE

The formation and elaboration of social stereotypes based on housing type and location bear on issues regarding urban processes, class formation, and state power. This becomes especially interesting in light of the changing class structure in the Belice towns following the

earthquake. I suggest that the negative stereotyping based on consumption patterns, particularly housing, serves as a social mechanism to distinguish different classes in a situation where previous markers of distinction have lost significance. House size and style have become less important as physical reminders of status linked to occupational criteria, while location and distance have emerged as primary markers of class and associated moral worth, based on one's relative dependence on the state. Paradoxically, in Sasi and other new towns, class segregation and stereotyping have increased as real differences in housing conditions have declined. The well established patterns of interaction between the classes in the traditional agrotown neighborhoods have been obstructed by new barriers, generating social relations of distance and antagonism. I argue that patterns of class segregation and the stereotypes emerging from this new spatial arrangement fulfill objectives of government policy vis-à-vis the Belize population. Ideological assumptions associated with modernization and Modernism have also influenced the new patterns of segregated residence constructed after the earthquake.

Class-segregated housing has evolved as a consequence of the increasing collectivization of public services by the government. But, the enlarged role of the state has resulted in two apparently contradictory processes. On the one hand, rigorous application of building codes has evened

out and homogenized the differences in housing in terms of hygiene, size, light, and room arrangement. Newly imposed standards for all housing in the new towns have created a sense of uniformity, as the basic housing conditions of the poor more nearly equal those of the middle classes. On the other hand, the strict implementation of new zoning codes has created locational distance and stylistic difference between the classes, creating and promoting social definitions of difference.

Manuel Castells points out that social cleavages are both created and exacerbated in the course of providing residential services by the state. There is a "new source of inequality inherent in the very use of these collective services" (Castells 1975: 175). Competition for state resources takes on a spatial dimension--who gets what where becomes the question. As Steven Pinch says, "the geographical patterns of collective consumption are the outcome of conflict and struggle between various groups" (Pinch 1985: 157). This understanding has particular resonance in the Mezzogiorno where class position is increasingly based on access to state financial resources (Guarrasi nd: 57-59). Furthermore, corruption is structurally endemic since "contracts for public works, including public housing construction, are generally controlled by the Mafia" (Angotti 1977: 102).

As discussed in Chapter IV, the government in capitalist economies can act as the mediator between

oppositional classes. Castells argues that patterns of social stratification are "specified" and "prolonged" by state involvement. In the case of settlement transformation in western Sicily, class differences have in fact been specified and given social meaning, in the sense that position in the socioeconomic hierarchy has been newly marked in easily readable structures and locational positions. Indication of status by residential location and government regulated house type, rather than by singular family histories and particular housing styles and size, is a quick and convenient social and political mechanism for marking difference.

There are various reasons different classes might now want to distinguish themselves (or be distinguished) from others. I focus here on some of the more important economic, social, and political characteristics influencing spatial segregation, using examples from European urban history. According to David Harvey, as space is increasingly commodified, the city becomes "fragmented terrain held together under all manner of forces of class, racial, and sexual domination" (Harvey 1985b: 14). At the same time, urban space becomes more homogenized, increasingly subject to access by all; that is, its ownership is reduced to the "ability to pay" (Harvey 1985b: 14). In short, fragmentation and homogenization become functionally linked in the capitalist city. Harvey uses Paris to demonstrate this connection. As Paris underwent

modernization, "more space was opened up physically"; the more this happened, "the more it had to be partitioned and closed off through social practice" (Harvey 1985d: 205). Class segregation, the topic of this chapter, works to create barriers, to provide the means by which different classes can "try to seal themselves off" from others when previous boundary mechanisms no longer work to articulate distance and separation (Harvey 1985b: 14).

In the Belice Valley land did undergo significant transformation in property relations. The site chosen for the Sasi reconstruction, for example, had been agricultural land held by one family for at least six generations. It was transformed into fragmented plots of urban real estate with the passage of the ISES plan, against the will of the owners. What had been a continuously productive expanse of land associated with a single family, became overnight a checkerboard of property holdings, bought and sold frequently, with speculative maneuverings and state decisions rapidly influencing their values. This land became directly accessible to all who had rights to the state's resources for reconstruction, the **contributi**. It was indirectly accessible to those with rights to join a cooperative or inhabit the **case popolari** as well. Based on the ISES arrangements regarding zoning and the varying levels of **contributi**, Sasi and other new settlements were carved up into different class-associated neighborhoods,

perpetuating a process by which inhabitants were more and more "sealed off" from one another.

This transformation of space into increasingly commodified plots of real estate relates to changing social relations. Examples of segregation elsewhere throw light on processes in the Belice. R. Ross and G. N. Telkamp (1985), writing about colonial cities, for instance, argue that residential integration was replaced by segregation as a consequence of changing patterns of social stratification. With the abolition of slavery, ascribed status was no longer socially operative. In the case of the colonial city, spatial segregation emerged as a means to declare and fix class positions newly determined by the free market in land and labor (Ross and Telkamp 1985; King 1985). It is "in open, mobile society where status is not ascribed, that spatial segregation becomes an index and expression of social stratification" (King 1985: 23).

This pattern of changing class politics has relevance in the Belice new towns. The system of stratification and mobility was manifestly altered by the earthquake and reconstruction. While relatively stable previously (except for the emergence of a small middle class in the post-unification reforms in the late nineteenth century), in the period following World War II, class became increasingly malleable. Emigration brought new and unexpected riches to the area in the 1960s; with access to outside labor markets, the fortunes of many in Calatafimi were

transformed dramatically. The general decline in agriculture brought about a fall in the proportion of the population defined as proletariat, from 45% to 26% between 1961 and 1971 (Caldo 1974: 82-85). The massive postwar emigration also influenced class structure as many of the four million southerners (Hine 1993: 40) to leave the Mezzogiorno in the 1951-1960 and 1961-1970 decades were from the lowest strata. Leaving the town was seen as a principal means of upward mobility (Caldo 1974: 79). With a great number of the poorest people gone, the size of the bourgeoisie increased (Cataudella 1977: 104). The percentage of the Belice middle-class increased from 17% in 1961 to 28% in 1971 (Caldo 1974: 82-85). The growth of the bourgeoisie was also linked to the important remittance economy, as "commuter" emigrants significantly bolstered the local economy with investments in consumption and housing (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 207-209).

Of equal or even greater significance than the decline of agriculture and large-scale emigration in the transformation of local class structure was the earthquake reconstruction. The bourgeoisie grew dramatically in number and power at this time (Renna 1979: 102). Competition over access to the massive amounts of state money, distributed as *contributi*, was an important variable in class positioning. Many Belice residents applied for some form of state reconstruction financing; most received something, some got rich, and the manipulation of the

reconstruction bureaucracy became a point of pride. All commercial activity associated with the construction of housing, roads, and infrastructure was hotly contested, generating much employment and vast fortunes for those successful enough to corner and monopolize the new business. The majority of migrants returning after the earthquake did so to work in the booming construction industry. In 1961, 24% of the active population was involved with *edilizia*, or construction. After the earthquake, 60% were so employed (Caldo 1974: 125). Using ISTAT figures, Caldo points out that the number of Belice-based construction companies rose from 47 in 1961 to 200 in 1971--figures, he argues, that vastly underestimate the true extent of growth in this sector (Caldo 1974: 125, n. 124). While this activity was ultimately linked to the tertiary economy, it generated new patterns of consumption and the vigorous display of wealth. A young man of noble heritage shook his head with disgust and discouragement: "these nouveau riche can neither read nor write, but they can count well their millions as they give thanks to the Madonna for the earthquake."

As the structure of social stratification underwent rapid change, the potential for status ambiguity increased. Class position and composition became more fluid and uncertain. In these circumstances, residential segregation of classes served to promote difference and overcome ambiguities of status and position. All new town residents

shared a fall in status position due to their common residence in the new town, Sasi. Because of this, residents of the private houses in Sasi no longer saw themselves as neighbors of those in the **case popolari**, as they had while living together in the integrated neighborhoods of the old town. Ironically, while all residents of the new towns were disparaged for living in the "dormitory," status differences between them have been elaborated upon in terms of residence.

Furthermore, segregation can perpetuate the changes already in course. "Segregation creates a vicious cycle, a self-fulfilling prophecy. Its consequences become its justification" (Newby 1968: 18). This was certainly so in the Belice where inhabitants of the **case popolari** were considered inferior and marked socially as low class and dependent. Inhabitants of the **case popolari** saw themselves as subject to state welfare for housing; the increased regulatory presence of the government and their subordinate status in the town are viewed as the necessary price they must pay for the security of residence. The inhabitants of private housing were considered superior and socially marked as privileged and independent. Although not greatly differentiated by their immediate surroundings, those in private houses feel different from and superior to residents of cooperatives and **case popolari**. In turn, cooperative residents looked down on those living in the projects, **il Bronx**. Status is at once more impersonally

assigned and more permanently indicated. Whereas one had to know another's particular family history and occupation to determine class and position in the old town, one need merely to know in what section of housing a person lives to judge their class and moral standing in the new town. This new arrangement circumscribes social mobility within tighter confines and less malleable categories. And, if the current trend toward segregated schools continues and deepens, then class position is established earlier and in a more profound way.

Ideological assumptions regarding notions of difference and distinction have also influenced experiments in the planned segregation of classes. Michel Foucault has addressed the origins of segregation, arguing that in a "perfectly governed city" the partitioning of residence according to class position represented early attempts to control illness and contagion, inspired by the danger of plague (Foucault 1977: 198). It was this concern with pollution and contagion that guided the well-defined models of segregation established in colonial cities. Fearing diseases associated with the lower-class indigenous populations, the French segregated North African cities into "theatres of apartheid" (Abu-Lughod in Rabinow 1989: 295-299; Abu-Lughod 1980). The English, in contrast, used segregation to facilitate political administration and the exercise of foreign hegemony in colonial cities (Rabinow 1989: 287-294).

Following the colonial cities experiments, segregation was associated with the idea of modernization and modernity in Europe. This idea corresponded to Haussman's late 19th century project to modernize Paris, where class segregation of the rich in the center and the poor on the periphery formed the centerpiece of the redevelopment effort (Harvey 1985d: 167). This pattern of city organization, the relocation of different groups vis-à-vis the urban center, has remained the predominant model of urban development throughout the 20th century in capitalist cities. Rome's **sventramento cauto e dolce** project is a good example of "clearance, cautious and sweet," of the poor from the city center (De Bonis 1979: 143; Trabalzi 1991: 130).¹³ In Sicily's capital city of Palermo the poor have been only partially removed from the center; in many center-city neighborhoods such as Albergheria, Ballarò, and Capo, "the **sottoproletariato** continues to reign supreme" (Chubb 1982: 36; see also Cole 1996, 1997).

In the Belice Valley new towns, settlement layout and housing architecture is essentially Modernist in design. The Modernist project was to open up the "donkey city," to clear away the dark crowded alleyways and jumble of close-

13. Twelve working class neighborhoods (**borghate**) were built on the city's periphery, far from the city center and each other, but near headquarters of both the military and police (Trabalzi 1991: 137). This urban policy of **sventramento**, literally the "gutting" or "disemboweling," of the poor from the capital's center, has been characterized as a combination of "benevolent paternalism and resolute apartheid" (Trabalzi 1991: 129).

knit neighborhoods. New plans for the Belice anticipated a great reduction in the population density. While national public housing laws (Piani di edilizia economica e popolare, or PEEP, established in Law n. 167) planned for a population density of 180 per acre, the Belice planners expropriated enough land for a density of 50 people per acre (De Bonis 1979: 119).¹⁴ Central to planning the Belice new towns was the idea of opening up large swaths of space for visual sweeps and architectural high drama. Yet one can argue that this was not a mere aesthetic decision regarding design.

Although Le Corbusier said little directly about class segregation, the scholar T. J. Clark argues that Modernism implicitly represents "a symbiosis...between new forms of modern culture and new forms of social control" (Clark in Zukin 1991: 27). The new forms of social control in Modernism relate to the use of architecture and design to mark and accentuate "a new, more polarized social order" (Zukin 1991:28). Class-segregated housing in the Belice does just this; it creates and increases new patterns of social polarization resulting from the decline of agriculture, emigration, and the economy of reconstruction.

But the implications of Modernist design are more profound in the segregated new towns. The expectation

14. Gibellina expropriated 181 hectares (347 acres) for a population of 4675 while Salemi expropriated 107.2 hectares (264 acres) for 3438 people. Excluding Calatafimi, ISES planned for 820 hectares (2025 acres) in total to be used for the new Belice settlements (Caldo 1974: 63).

behind the "modern and functional residential proposal" put forth in the housing policy of ISES was that "each residence exist in complex public relations with the other residences and in their totality form the fabric of public management of the urban-territorial structure" (ISES 1972: 74, 57). The planners from ISES recognized class segregation--which they referred to as the "ghettofication of the less affluent stratum"--inherent in the design of the new towns. Despite negative connotations associated with the "ghetto" however, ISES offered no suggestions for ways to eliminate or reduce this tendency (ISES 1972:74). Instead, the intent of the government was to create and use class segregation precisely as a mechanism of "public management." In the model of the modern town, state planners have acknowledged class segregation as an important component, and on this basis, planned distinctly differentiated areas of housing relative to three newly defined housing classes. Different classes were effectively cordoned off from one another.

Why did the new town planners think it important to separate and divide the different classes? Patterns of class distinction in housing may have been promoted unconsciously in their plans as part of the standard repertoire of urbanism. From their professional training in planning and architecture in capitalist society, they may very well carry archetypal ideas regarding the shape of

city or town and the arrangement of people (and classes) within it.

The state assumed responsibility for public order. In an area of high unemployment and devastation from natural disaster, the government faced a formidable task of social control. Was residential segregation of classes a response to the cross-class protest movement, with its clearly demonstrated potential to spread beyond the region's boundaries?

Foucault reminds us that urban planning by the modern state can be used as an attempt to codify and discipline the population. The state imposes an "orderly grid" of space: "this grid permits the sure distribution of the individuals to be disciplined and supervised" (Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 154). The state further guarantees that "each individual has a place and each place has an individual" (Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 155). Patterns of class segregation in the new towns, like those of military hospitals, "regularize and control...dangerous interminglings."

I would recall here Gabaccia's descriptions of the "easy minglings" of different classes for work and social life (Gabaccia 1984: 26). These easy minglings became a threat to state authority in the organized protest movement of the Belice victims. Interminglings that were once central to the social, economic, and political life in the old towns evolved in such a way as to threaten the status

quo after the earthquake. With the new towns, the potential for cross-class alliances has been minimized and the need to dismantle them reduced. In Sasi no longer do children play ball together, no longer do richer women share housework, childcare, and gossip with poorer women. Contact between residents has been reduced: residents live in their own housing estates and drive into town to interact with others there.

The disciplinary aspect of segregated housing acts on the resident in a deeper way as well; it can influence not only political and social relations, but the psychology of individuals as well. Foucault's perspective on segregation as a convenient and self-regulating method of social control allows us to make sense of the structure of new settlements. H. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (1982) summarize Foucault's point of view regarding the significant historical transformation in the exercise of power. First they discuss his views of pre-capitalist society, and then the emergence of disciplinary society and its attendant changes:

In traditional forms of power, like that of the sovereign, power itself is made visible, brought out in the open, constantly on display. The multitudes are kept in the shadows, appearing only at the edges of the power's brilliant glow. Disciplinary power reverses these relations. Now, it is power itself which seeks invisibility and the objects of power--those on whom it operates--are made the most visible. It is this fact of surveillance, constant visibility, which is the key to disciplinary technology. [Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 159]

This understanding of disciplinary society illuminates processes associated with modern urbanism--in particular, the transition of settlement from agrotown to new town. In the old towns, classes are jumbled together in a disorderly fashion, the result of complex history and particular configurations of politics and economic life. In the reconstructed Belice towns the "multitudes"--those classes increasingly dependent on the state for their housing--are made visible in a most obvious manner. The physical manifestation of the status hierarchy in terms of housing circumscribes and makes apparent the public and private lives of the inhabitants. As a result of the new class segregation, divisions between housing classes within the reconstructed new towns are elaborated into divisive stereotypes which isolate and fracture each group and mask their common interests. Shared goals, articulated through protest, such as the much needed investment in new productive capacities, fade in importance, while differences between the groups are accentuated.

Foucault's "model of government rationality" is evident in the way the Belice population was quarantined in dormitory towns and housing ghettos. The state provides housing designed so that the population divides itself, and in so doing creates social distance between the classes. Segregation acts as one of the most important "mechanisms of power to frame the everyday lives of individuals" (Foucault 1977: 77). Repressive and expensive government

measures are less essential in a situation where stereotypes function to create walls and boundaries.

First, there is the segregation of the young and the financially dependent in the new towns. In the case of Sasi, the new area is "looked down upon" both literally and figuratively. Standing at the high point in the cemetery of the old town one can view the entire new settlement spread out over the valley floor below. All the new settlements are built at lower altitudes than the old ones (see footnote 11 in this chapter for figures). This physical layout presents the new towns as starkly subordinate.

Segregation within the new town itself generates different levels of visibility. Essentially, the potential for surveillance varies with house type (see Figure 18). The housing of the poorest, most dependent segment of the population is the most exposed; the **case popolari** are situated in such a way as to provide maximum visibility. The first group of houses is centrally located between the cooperatives and clusters of private housing. Traffic passes on three of the four sides of the unit. The second group of **case popolari** is comprised of long row houses, jutting out from the most distant southern periphery of the new town. From most vantage points in Sasi, one can observe these apartment blocks and note their separation from the central areas of the new town.

Visible from all sides, the poorest are the most identified and stigmatized. If Foucault is right, this position of exposure perpetuates in each inhabitant a mechanism of self-surveillance. While the locational arrangement implies the surveillance by others, whether or not there is anybody actually "looking" becomes unimportant. In this way exposure can serve as the "automatic functioning of power" (Foucault 1977: 201).

Cooperative housing of middle-class state employees is more internal to the new settlement, physically located between the peripheral popular housing and the more centralized private housing. Such an intermediate location corresponds to the position of the cooperative residents as privileged dependents on the state for their jobs and advantageous house loans. Their physical location and socioeconomic standing put them in the position as a buffer between the more independent and wealthy in private housing and the poorest and most dependent in **case popolari**.

The arrangement of private housing in Sasi indicates the privileged position of its inhabitants vis-à-vis the state. This area of housing is closest to the old town, corresponding to the closeness in class status between old town residents and the owners of private houses in the new town. A large cul-de-sac defines the area of private housing; this allows residents there to look in on themselves, rather than be surveyed by other Sasi residents. They turn their backs, so to speak, on the

other types of housing in the new town. In this way the spatial organization of private housing allows its inhabitants to socially interact with each other more as they could in the old town.

Notwithstanding the neat arrangement of status distinctions in spatial terms, the population is not fully disciplined, nor is the state fully disciplinarian. Reconstruction drags on after more than twenty years, and the rigorous structuring of space built into the new towns is still counterbalanced by the more integrated and less regulated residential patterns of the old towns for those who can afford to remain.

There is little in the way of articulated opposition to the new patterns of class segregated residence in Sasi. Many are satisfied to receive new housing after such a long wait, and fail to perceive or concern themselves with the new politics of class division associated with it. Furthermore, the presence of a group of people with fixed scars of inferiority and subordination makes social scapegoating attractive and easy.

Despite the criticism that life in the **case popolari** of Sasi is too close and there is too much "shared in common," it is precisely this aspect of social life that makes the old town so appealing. The social and economic benefits of heterogenous neighborhoods are still appreciated by many in the Mezzogiorno (e.g. see White 1980: 31). In fact, quite a few residents of Calatafimi,

with rights to lots in Sasi, refuse to move there until they can maneuver house placement in such a way as to recreate important clusterings of kin and friends.

CHAPTER VII

CONSTRUCTING AND RECONSTRUCTING THE ARCHITECTURE OF GENDER

1. INTRODUCTION

To talk about the family and the house in Sicily is to talk of men and women and changing patterns of sexual geography. The reconstruction of western Sicilian towns damaged by the 1968 earthquake has brought about significant transformations in domestic architecture and settlement. Changes in the design of towns and houses have been accompanied in turn by changing ideas about men and women and the spaces they inhabit. In the past twenty years, the traditional sexual geography of the Mediterranean agrotown has been both reinforced and challenged. In the past, women were generally restricted to the domestic space of the home and adjacent courtyard while men were free to enter the public space of the street and the cafe, the center of local economics and politics. In what follows I treat changes in architecture in the reconstructed settlements and the inhabitants' reactions to these changes as a vantage point on contested ideas about gender, morality, and space.

In the previous chapter I examined the changing class politics in the new context of reconstructed towns. The structure of settlement and the design of exterior space clearly influenced the dynamics of class identity and relations; the role of the state in daily life was

differentially increased and its control over the populace was perpetuated in spatial form. Here the focus is on changes of interior domestic architecture. This allows me to address another important nexus of power, that of gender relations within the household. The complicated interaction between gender, work, and the spatial arrangements of residence as regulated by the state, is the main concern of investigation.

After discussing patterns of gender segregation in traditional dwellings and agrotowns of the western Sicilian interior, I focus on the new housing forms built after the earthquake. Reconstruction coincided with the arrival of new ideas from the feminist movement regarding women's work and role in the public realm. These ideas influenced thoughts regarding privacy and domesticity related to honor-shame ideologies. The planners of the new towns either disregarded or disapproved of the different ways men and women inhabited public and private space in the agrotowns of western Sicily. Furthermore, they overlooked the social functions of different types of spaces in the traditional settlements. Because of this, the design and construction of the spatial environment assumed new and unprecedented forms in the Belice Valley.

In the dramatically transformed architectural context of the new towns, ideas of public and private life, as well as male and female spatial domains, were recast using models foreign to the Sicilian experience. Ironically,

along with new patterns of class-segregated housing, the barriers between male and female spatial domains and between different families, increased in the post-earthquake housing built by the state. Men and women found themselves more isolated, both from each other and from other men and women. They found themselves less self-reliant and less connected to neighborhood networks. At the same time, they felt more dependent on commercial markets. While the architectural design of the old towns emphasized the contrasts between the community of men and the community of women, in the new towns the individual and the nuclear family have taken precedence.

It is from this perspective that I discuss the reactions of inhabitants--particularly women--to the constraints associated with new housing, as they have challenged the new spatial arrangements of gender designed by architects and planners hired by the Italian state. In general, women found the new housing designs of the reconstructed settlements to be restrictive and inconvenient. As designed by planners, the structures of domestic space in the new towns no longer function as they did in the agrotown--women's social lives and work patterns have been confined and constricted in new and often unwanted ways. In response to this, they have modified the new spaces of Modernist design to better accommodate their particular needs and desires. As class influences women's social lives and work differently, so has it affected the

modifications of the new housing. Poorer women changed new housing to facilitate home production activities, while richer women began to reject agglomerated settlement altogether in favor of resettlement in detached suburban villas in the countryside. Examination of these two different responses to the new housing gives perspective on changing gender ideals as they have intersected with changing material circumstances of work and the domestic environment.

2. THE TRADITIONAL AGROTOWN

As already noted, the settlement pattern in the Belice Valley was relatively uniform and stable before the earthquake. Densely populated towns, agglomerated on relatively small areas of land, were built for a predominantly agricultural population. Off the main *corso*, small narrow streets, "mere passageways," were lined with contiguous housing, broken up only by courtyard entrances, churches, and small shops (Blok 1974: 20). Like the settlement architecture of North African villages, western Sicilian towns give the feeling of enclosure; long expanses of walls, with few openings and almost no green, characterize the streets of the villages in the area (Oliver 1987: 119, 202; Valussi 1968: 38).

The traditional house type of the agrotown was established in the 16th and 17th centuries, and there is minimal variation in the rows of linked (*a schiera*) housing

from town to town. "The houses, all attached, were constructed piecemeal over centuries with the result that neighbors share common walls and sometimes common entrances, stairwells, and roofs" (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 224, 225). Some suggest that the only change in Sicilian housing between then and the postwar period was a continuing decline and impoverishment of the original form (see e.g., Renna 1979: 59). The agrotown remained the dominant settlement type until the construction boom associated with investment of emigrant remittances in the 1960s and the government reconstruction projects of the 1970s and 1980s.

Space in the traditional agrotown was subject to what Mary Helms calls "dichotomized zoning," with divisions between public areas of the town center and semi-private and private residential areas on the periphery (Helms 1988: 22). Settlement in western Sicily conformed to the ideals expressed in the Portuguese proverb: "The world of the woman is the house: the house of the man is the world" (in S. Cole 1991: 87).

The traditional agrotown was traversed by a central corridor or boulevard, the **corso**. Shops, offices, municipal buildings, bars, men's clubs, and **piazze** were located along this axis. The main **piazza**, viewed as the "heart" of the village (Blok 1974: 21), was considered the center of male public space, the area where men moved freely to work, shop, and socialize. As such, it was the

site of much business and political activity, both formal and informal, both among local men and with outsiders.

Yet the public character of the central zone for men was never absolute; instead its public-private patterning varied by time and function (Sciama 1993: 88). For instance, the public nature of coffee bars fluctuated. Theoretically open to all, bars were nevertheless informally segregated by class and occupational groupings, as well as by gender. Some bars were associated with young men, others with old; some were frequented by leftist-leaning peasants, others by petty bourgeois shopkeepers (see also Hansen 1977: 119-133). No bars were considered public domain for women, although some welcomed families during the *passeggiata*.

Sanctions against women entering the male space of the bars (and butchershops) were especially rigid. A neighbor worked in a bar as a young woman and now, ten years later, still remembers with bitter resentment the way she was snubbed by townspeople for working in such an exclusively male place. She is poor and uneducated, and sees her foray into the workforce as a humiliation of poverty, not gender. Needless to say, her daughters are rarely permitted outside without chaperones; they watch through the railings of the upstairs balcony as other children play in the street.

Being without a telephone in our apartment, I was forced to use the "public" phone booth at the very back wall of the nearby bar. As I often called the United

States during lunch time in Sicily, the absence of women in the streets and in the bar was especially pronounced as most were home preparing the important midday meal. The pointed glassy stares made me uncomfortable as I tramped to the back of the bar; worse still, some of the men, strangers to me, stubbornly blocked the path to the phone and I was forced to negotiate a route around them.

The public functions of the *corso* also shifted according to time and context. While normally the exclusive domain of men, on summer weekends and during religious festivals, the evening *passeggiata* was enlivened by women. Dressed up and accompanied by their families, they paraded up and down the *corso*. At most other times women would deliberately avoid the downtown area (Booth 1988). During the ordinary business day, for instance, they avoided the *corso* either by having their male relatives do the shopping and other tasks or by bringing along their children to buffer them in the male areas.¹ Not surprisingly, the *corso* was often difficult to negotiate with children. Baby carriages were especially cumbersome: where there were sidewalks, curbs were uneven and awkwardly spaced; where there were not, cars rushed by, menacing the carriage, caught between street and buildings.

1. Children can act as chaperones perhaps because women with children symbolically declare to onlookers their status as mothers, reducing any possible ambiguity regarding their presence in male space.

Fumes belched out of tailpipes precisely at the height of the baby's head.

Finally, the most exclusive of all public places on the **corso** were the men's clubs, the **circoli**. Membership in these store-front clubs was formally divided by class and occupational group. Each town in western Sicily had a number of **circoli**; e.g., a club for the **civili** (or bourgeois) class, a fishermen-hunters' club, a leftist workers' club, and a sports fans' club. The **circoli** were, by definition, restricted. Women were not welcome as members nor were they comfortable entering these clubs even to communicate with their menfolk. Young boys, employed by the nearby bars, served as go-betweens, delivering coffee, drinks, and messages to the men in the **circoli**.

Despite the varying public-private quality of town space, the geographic distribution of different areas in a town can be viewed as a continuum of public and private zones of male and female activities. While the **corso** was much travelled by outside visitors and the male population of the town, the adjoining neighborhoods were the domain of residents. Only neighborhood men had free movement in the semi-public side streets, where they stored agricultural equipment and tools and assisted with domestic work. Along these side streets, lined with entrances to houses and courtyards and interspersed with small shops, other men were unwelcome; backs turned, doors closed, and aggressive

gazes of the more confrontational older women made the stranger uncomfortable.

Women used these streets to work, socialize, and move through the town. When visiting kin or friends across town, women would often use indirect routes through back streets to avoid the *corso*.² Public services used by women more than men, such as communal water fountains and dry goods stores, were also located in these zones of more concentrated residence on the semi-periphery. The institutional space of the elementary school, associated more with women and children, was also frequently situated at some distance from the main *corso*, despite its central importance to all families.

During ordinary weekdays these side streets were used exclusively by women; they watched children, cooked, sewed, embroidered, and socialized outside their doorways (Valussi 1968: 29; Schneider and Schneider 1976: 93). There they had more space and better light than indoors and, more importantly, the company of neighborhood women. Sitting on rickety chairs outside their homes, they participated in the street life of their own making.

Men of the neighborhood could act as "mediators" for women, transferring information between the outside world in the center of town and the domestic one in the home

2. This again recalls Arab settlement. Fernea (1965) describes how Iraqi women in purdah employ similar round-about routes to avoid entering the male space of the town center.

(Schneider and Schneider 1976: 102). Occasionally men helped women with household chores in this semi-public area, usually with special projects associated with harvests and food processing. The task of putting up tomatoes, for example, brought men into the streets. Three generations of the family might gather in a **cortile** or garage to cook and bottle the year's supply of tomato sauce. Customary rules regarding gender and behavior were suspended as men wore aprons and women commanded the street.

The most significant semi-public space for women in the traditional agrotown was the courtyard, or **cortile**. The courtyard has been a defining feature of western Sicilian settlement since the medieval period of Arab-Norman colonizations (roughly between the 9th and 14th centuries). It has displayed remarkable continuity throughout the history of urban structure due to its functional utility in the daily life of agriculturalists (Guidoni 1982: 6). In his comprehensive study of pre-earthquake residential patterns in Sicily, Giorgio Valussi (1968: 184) argues that the most characteristic element of the house, both in town and in the countryside, was the courtyard, the terrace, or the alcove on the sidestreet, that is, the semi-public workspace of women.

The **cortile** was the most exclusive of women's exterior space; it functioned as an open, semi-public, semi-private space, shared only by kin and nearest female neighbors (see

Figure 19) (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 224). Enclosed by houses on three sides and by an often-gated entryway or small door on the fourth, the courtyard served as an extension of the kitchen for surrounding houses, and was used communally.³ The **cortile**, the primary workspace for women, was commonly linked to the house by the kitchen entry. While men stored equipment, animals, and transport vehicles in the courtyard, it was women who spent much time in the space. They used the area to clean and prepare agricultural products, cook for their families and seasonal workers, wash and dry laundry, and collect rain water (Valussi 1968: 44; Schneider and Schneider 1976: 224). Furthermore, the openness of the **cortile** gave light to the interiors of surrounding houses. Importantly, as the "center of all agricultural and family movement" the courtyard was the physical form of "social protection," providing a sheltered workspace for women, invisible to the passing public (Valussi 1968: 44).

This description of sexually segregated space in the traditional Sicilian agrotown cannot be understood without reference to ideologies regarding honor, shame, and gender-based expectations of behavior. Female domestic seclusion and men's participation in public life are seen as central components in the honor-shame code common in the Mediterranean area. Gender and sexuality have influenced

3. This meant that conflicts between neighbors living in close quarters could easily erupt over questions of courtyard use (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 224, 226).

and been influenced by the creation and use of different types of space--public and private, political and social, commercial and domestic--in the agrotown of western Sicily. Local patterns of class stratification as well as expressions of state power intersect these variables in significant ways (J. Schneider 1971; Schneider and Schneider 1976; Ortner 1978; Gilmore 1987a, 1990; Cole 1991). A brief description of the spatial aspects associated with the honor-shame complex provides a background for understanding traditional patterns of gender segregation in the agrotown.

The honor-shame complex is found primarily in small-scale societies where public opinion and reputation are largely determined by townspeople's talk (Peristiany 1966). Honor and shame refer to positioning, public evaluations based on a combination of factors related to gender-based expectations, such as sexual conduct, economic success, and family provisioning (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 87; Gilmore 1987a: 7). More specifically, women are expected to marry and married women are expected to reproduce and maintain the family with work within or close to the home. They should restrict their sexual relations to their husbands and their social relations to women and close male relatives. Social expectations of men's behavior are different; men should be reproductively potent, financially able to support their families, capable of maintaining exchange relations with male friends and, significantly, in

control over their wives' and daughters' sexual and social behavior. Female chastity and modesty and male domination over women comprised a family's honor, while shame accrued from the absence of these expected qualities (see Schneider and Schneider 1976: 86-94).

Particular spatial dimensions are associated with male and female behavior. Women's family housework occurs in context of neighborhood social networks in the courtyard, at the fountain, or on the street. While secluded from contact with all but the closest men, they still interact easily with other women in specific domestic and semi-public areas. And these areas do feel private. Walking into neighborhoods in which I was not known, the glances of the seated women made me feel invasive and unwelcome. When my husband accompanied me, the chairs scraped the paving stones as they were quickly turned inwards.

Although it is assumed that men take responsibility for controlling women's sexuality, the situation takes a different shape in the day-to-day experience of women. True, a man will lose honor from the actions of an adulterous wife or a promiscuous daughter, yet it could be argued that the monitoring of women is largely imposed by women themselves. It is not the act of transgression itself that is stigmatized, but the possibility of being seen, exposed in such an act. Women often worry about the visibility of their own behavior; they are anxious about encountering a male acquaintance unexpectedly. Caterina,

an educated women with a job in a public office, said that she avoided the **corso**; upon meeting her male friends and colleagues, she would feel compelled to greet them, and being seen doing so would generate doubt regarding her good reputation. Women take circuitous paths to avoid the eyes of men sitting outside bars. They criticize each other for transgressions, for crossing into the more public, more male areas of the town. It was other women who reminded me of where and when I could move about town without my husband by my side.⁴ Girls need not be told to avoid the **piazza**, they do so from fear of the condemning talk of others (Giovannini 1987: 67). Traditionally, at least, most women have accepted and internalized the gender-based expectations of comportment associated with different areas of the agrotown.

In contrast to women's seclusion, men can, indeed must, be seen in public areas, engaging in friendship exchanges, business, and politics. Their masculinity would be suspect if they were to spend much time in the domestic areas of women's work and social life (Gilmore 1990: 51-2). David Gilmore identifies a sort of "social agoraphilia"-- the necessity to be "on stage" in the bars, in the **piazza**, in the social clubs, that validates men's claim to manliness (Gilmore 1990: 36). Indeed, the men in

4. When my husband left town for a few weeks, my women friends were constantly nearby; in the name of companionship, they made sure I did nothing to damage my reputation.

Calatafimi were visibly relieved when my husband stood among them in the **piazza** during the evenings, despite his initial ignorance of the language.

These patterns of sex segregation have far-reaching ramifications. Since women's social behavior is linked to the moral evaluation of the family, the community takes on a public responsibility to guard and monitor female behavior (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 93). As a form of public surveillance, the town becomes a "watchful community" (Gilmore 1987b: 101).

The patterns of sex segregation in the traditional agrotown reinforce ideas about the different attributes of men and women. Secluded women are seen as guarded, perpetuating the idea that they require protection from desire--both men's and their own, since as they say, a match held close to fire will light! By contrast, men are seen as active participants in community life, supporting the belief that they be trusted with larger decision-making responsibilities for the town. Generally, this public role of men in the **piazza** precludes their participation in childcare in the home.⁵

Since Malinowski (1922) found Trobriander men and women separated into different spaces with varying

5. According to Gilmore, this absence of adult men in the domestic realm has psychological consequences--namely, an unnaturally strong bond between mother and son, a failure of adolescent boys to identify with adult males, and subsequently, a compensatory ethic of aggressive machismo (Gilmore 1987a).

functions and levels of importance, anthropologists have grappled with the problem of gender segregation and sexual stratification. Levi-Strauss (1963) asked if societies were composed of dualistic structures united dialectically in their very separateness. Jane and Peter Schneider prod us to think of power when trying to understand an ideological construct such as the honor-shame code. According to the Jane and Peter Schneider, the historical origins of the honor-shame complex lie in the combined effort of the Catholic Church and the nation state to break up the powerful patrilineal groups (see also Ortner 1978). They argue that the code serves to reduce violence in a situation of unregulated competition; women's virginity (and its correlate, men's honor) serves as currency for exchange between otherwise impoverished families (J. Schneider 1971; Schneider and Schneider 1976). The spatial attributes of the honor-shame code provide a complementary perspective on how power operates between the sexes and between the classes.

Potentially, women's social power is considerable as a result of their control over reproduction. In western Sicily, where the honor-shame code is so pervasive, the power of women over social reproduction is great indeed. Secluded in the house, from which men are in large part excluded, women can take charge of the family economy, the socialization of children, and household decision-making. Schneider and Schneider point out that married women often

arrange marriages and can take an active role real estate and inheritance decisions (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 93-94). Men are often subordinate in the domestic realm. Charlotte G. Chapman writes of a Sicilian father, shamed by his daughter's elopement, who had to beg his wife for the two dollars needed to drown his troubles in liquor (Chapman 1971: 242).

Because men are cut off from information regarding the family and household, some scholars (e.g., Freidl 1967; Rogers 1975; Cole 1991) argue that in fact women are the more powerful members of these societies, operating "behind the scenes" so to speak (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 93). Sally Cole (1991), in her study of Portuguese maritime women, suggests that control over the household economy can serve as a means to challenge state-sponsored ideology regarding male dominance and female inferiority. This powerful position of women in the domestic realm is also seen as a form of compensation for their lowly standing in the hierarchy of public power. Finally, it has been pointed out that women in the Mediterranean have a negative power, the power to damage men's social status by sexual transgressions (Pitt-Rivers 1977; Cole 1991).

Although women may exercise considerable power in the domestic arena, they are excluded from spheres of the real economic and political power of public life. Their productive role in the economy is largely disguised in unpaid housework. When they engage in work in the outside

economy it is usually with their husbands or as low-level piece workers. Women's participation in public decision-making is severely limited, if not altogether absent in the agrotowns.

Recognizing the way women's exclusion from power and public life is related to the spatial constraints associated with the honor-shame code allows speculation about general patterns of gender stratification. Are women ascribed a subordinate status vis-à-vis men because of their (potential) power over social reproduction? Clearly women's inferior position is reinforced by their rigid exclusion from the public spaces, from the "heart" of real power and politics (J. Schneider 1971; Belmonte 1979; Giovannini 1987). Spatial segregation has reified the differences between male and female, marking the boundaries and making the distinctions between them appear natural and immutable. If families must commit resources to the control of their women, they need not do so in isolation: the monitoring of the domestic sphere, the space of the women, is most easily achieved by the women themselves, while they are conveniently fulfilling tasks of social reproduction in their seclusion.

The spatial aspect of the honor-shame code also influences class relations. Poorer men are caught in a bind of dishonor; by working in low-status manual work or in the **piazza**, they advertise their unemployment and their inability to provide security for their families. Middle-

class men are observed managing others' labor or in leisure, which confers prestige and high status. A similar dynamic operates in evaluations of women's class positions. The reputations of poorer women compelled to work in semi-public and public areas suffer. Those forced to interact with merchants or other men in the course of economic activities pay a price in terms of status and reputation. Middle-class women, on the other hand, work isolated in their homes, free from shame associated with contact they might otherwise have with non-family men. In short, class positions are reproduced and class mobility is impeded by the ideological evaluations of men and women and the way they use different spaces in the agrotown for work and leisure.

3. HOUSES IN THE TRADITIONAL AGROTOWN

The divisions of town space into spatial continua of male-female and public-private were reiterated in the divisions of house interiors. Generally, women were expected to remain within the private space of the home and the semi-public space of the **cortili** or alleyways. But, in residential space, like that of the town, class differences complicated the gender segregation of household space.

There was significant regularity of housing form for poor and middle-income peasants in the agrotown. Made of the same materials (tufaceous rock), they could vary in size, structure (number of rooms), and number of stories.

The typical, one-story, single cellular house of a poor peasant family had four separate areas for storage, stall and hayloft, a kitchen at the entrance, and an elevated alcove for sleeping in the back of the unit (see Figure 16). A two-story house of a poor peasant family had areas for storage, stall and hay on the ground floor, and sleeping space upstairs. The kitchen area of this home was often part of an outside alcove in the courtyard or on the street (Valussi 1968: 37).

Houses of richer inhabitants were bigger and thus able to divide more neatly into private and semi-public areas. The two-story, two-room house of a richer peasant family (**burgisi** or **civili**) was typically composed of a ground floor with an entryway, a kitchen-dining area, stalls and a hayroom, and a storage area for transport vehicles and agricultural goods. The upper floor was divided into bedrooms, a dining room, a living room, a kitchen, and a storage area (Figure 15). A **burgisi** house might have had two kitchens; the one on the ground floor was used for daily cooking, feeding of harvest laborers, and large-scale food processing. This area was frequently shared by two families (Valussi 1968: 48). The kitchen upstairs was reserved for family use and special occasions (Valussi 1968: 43).

Residence in the traditional agrotown was divided between day and night spaces. Day space, comprising the kitchen and the courtyard, was the focal point of women's

activities. Women's activities associated with work, agricultural and socially reproductive, was centered here. The kitchen area, particularly in smaller, poorer houses, was either outside or linked to the outside by an entryway. Women, especially poorer ones, worked in kitchen areas that frequently spilled out into the semi-public space of the courtyard or street. Thus, there was a more communal aspect to lower-class women's activities than to those of richer women due to the spatial arrangement of their homes and work areas. Night space was restricted to the privacy of the family and was shared by men, women and children for sleeping.

Day space was separated in an upstairs area in the homes of richer women. **Burgisi** and **civili** women worked in an upstairs kitchen for at least part of the time. While removed from contact with the street and courtyard, these kitchens frequently opened on to balconies, which faced the street and neighboring balconies. These women used kitchen balconies as extensions of the workspace and for socializing with neighbors. A separate study and living room allowed the richer men exclusive areas in which to conduct business or entertain. In houses of the rich, boys and girls shared sleeping areas as well, but were well segregated for other activities.

To summarize, the architecture of gender in the traditional agrotown operated on two different physical and conceptual levels. Settlement and residential space were

both divided into different domains exclusively inhabited by either men or women. In the town space external to the house, access varied most significantly by gender and secondarily by class and occupation. Men enjoyed easy access to politics and economic activities by virtue of their easy access to central public places. Women's movements were ordinarily confined to private and semi-public areas associated with social reproduction and consumption. (Intermediate times and spaces in which these rules of spatial use could be temporarily suspended further reinforced their importance.) This gender differentiated use of space reinforced the structures of inequality between men and women.

The implications of these spatial patterns of gender segregation bear on larger aspects of gender stratification. The findings from Sicily corroborate the cross-cultural research of Daphne Spain (1992). She finds women's low status consistently linked to high levels of spatial segregation. Where women have only limited or no access to places of socially-valued information--the workplace, school, places in the house or town associated with business and politics--there is little possibility of gender equality. By contrast, in societies where socially-valued information is accessible to both men and women in shared spaces, there tends to be more parity between the sexes.

It is important to remember that the nature of the information valued by men and women differs. In the public areas of southern Italian towns, men discuss business, politics and social life; contracts are mediated, exchanges arranged, jobs secured, and prices negotiated (White 1980: 150). Excluded from the news exchanged in the town center, women's access to socially-valued information was limited to the neighborhoods, side streets, and courtyards. While not publicly recognized as powerful, women exercised a measure of social control over important spheres of Sicilian private and public life--namely the family domestic economy (home production and social reproduction) and the social reputation of townspeople, neighbors, and kin (see also S. Cole 1991). Marriage ties, family status, personal standing, and honor are all discussed, negotiated, and determined in the course of women's talk (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 93-4, 207). The spatial domain of this talk is that of women's work areas, the kitchen and the semi-public sidestreet and **cortile**. The arrangement of these areas allowed women the wherewithall to work communally and to exchange information.

Class differences complicate this model, intersecting with spatial patterns of gender in the agrotown. Like the bourgeois home of nineteenth century United States and England (Spain 1992: 113), the houses of richer Sicilians were more effectively structured to segregate the sexes for different activities. Creating internal barriers between

men and women allowed the rich to uphold and perpetuate notions of honor. The rich could afford to build separate rooms for men and women, as well as two kitchens--one specially removed from immediate contact with the **cortile**. Thus, work space in the agrotown was not shared by richer women as it was among the poor, but was instead restricted for the use of family women alone. Use of the balcony to exchange information only partially mitigated the isolation of middle-class women. The consequences of this went beyond the mere attainment of respect and social position; the spatial barriers around richer women were more imposing and ultimately more isolating.

There is little question that Sicilian society is and has long been characterized by the unequal relations of patriarchy. In southern Italy "a woman was good if she was a selfless wife and mother subordinating herself to husband, family, church, and society" (Birnbaum 1986: xv). More importantly, women's work of childcare and housework has not been highly valued, either socially or financially. Nor is it visible, as it takes place in areas hidden from the public eye.

Spain's model regarding gender, space, and segregation is clearly illustrated by the agrotown, where patriarchy is supported by the spatially segregated work of men and women. Sicilian men dominate with control over legal, economic, and political aspects of local life. They control spheres of influence by means of their easy access

to the public areas of interaction--men's interaction. Political influence and jobs providing the household income are gained by means of networking in the public sphere. Richer men in professional occupations can move in the most exclusive public places--the elite bars and *circoli*--and so can preserve and enhance their higher position with their hold on the more restricted and most valued information.

Women of the traditional agrotown had little or no access to the economics and politics of the public sphere and thus little social power vis-à-vis men. Yet, the semi-public nature of women's work in the poorer quarters complicated their position. By virtue of their shared work spaces near or in the courtyard or side street, they had access to relatively important social information (White 1980: 150). While the male workspace was inaccessible to women, female work space of the poorer classes was by necessity used by men for passing through, storing goods and tools, and working.⁶ In short, poorer women had occasion to share information both between themselves and with men. So, while poorer women may have suffered a fall in honor and respect by being seen engaged in domestic

6. Ernestine Friedl (1975) correlates gender stratification with work patterns to point out that in societies where men and women work in close contact there tends to be relatively higher levels of gender equality than in societies where men and women work apart. From this we might expect relations between men and women in Sicilian middle-class families to be more patriarchal than those between men and women in poor families since the work of middle-class men and women is more often separated than that of working-class people.

tasks, they simultaneously enjoyed greater access to and more control over social information than did bourgeois women.

4. SICILIAN SOCIETY TRANSFORMED: FEMINISM AND WOMEN'S WORK

The earthquake of 1968 often serves as a historical watershed in popular thought, marking the beginning of an irrevocable transformation of conservative Sicilian society. Perhaps more than the student and worker movements, the feminist movement had explosive consequences in Sicily, where male-female relations have been extremely conservative and patriarchal. Like the protest movement of the Belice victims which challenged notions of class hierarchy (albeit unsuccessfully), the feminist movement in Sicily pried open new debates--this time regarding the patriarchal authority of men over women.

The social and economic convulsions associated with the "economic miracle" of the 1950s and 1960s formed the backdrop for the massive physical upheaval of the earthquake. Modernization, the economic and cultural integration into national society, and particularly the feminist movement, dramatically and permanently impacted Sicily.⁷ These changes were represented locally by a

7. Dennis Mack Smith points out the uneven nature of this modernization in western Sicily. Mafia interests blocked industrialization, fearing the development of an educated proletariat. Meanwhile, those same mafia interests were deeply involved with the speculative building boom of the 1960s, where planning rules and building codes were ignored in the tremendous explosion of construction in the cities

hemorrhaging of the population due to emigration losses and a new affluence resulting from remittances and state spending in the area. The economic miracle refers to the linked processes of dramatically declining agriculture in the South and rapidly developing industry in the North. In Sicily, the great exodus from the land and flight to the North of the male labor force meant that towns were "feminized." They became "women's colonies" populated overwhelmingly by women, children and the elderly (Birnbaum 1986: 241). Despite the great number of female-headed households, feminism faced many major obstacles in the South, especially in Sicily.⁸

The most formidable barriers confronted by the feminist movement in the Mezzogiorno were linked to the conservative social and political climate. Women were legally and economically subordinate to men (Birnbaum 1986: 13) and "imprisoned" by the traditional family structures (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 93). The dominant institutional powers in Sicily--the Christian Democratic Party, the Catholic Church, and the mafia--together

and agricultural towns. Yet, Mack Smith concedes that large-scale social changes of the 1960s associated with feminism, emigration, and increased communications did interfere with the hegemonic hold of the mafia over western Sicily (Mack Smith 1968: 539-42).

8. Judith Hellman, in her study of Italian feminism, claims that while northern cities each had their own specific problems in mobilizing women, in the South the feminist movement faced all the problems found in the North combined, plus others (Hellman 1987: 184).

resisted progressive social change promoted in the feminist platform (Hellman 1987: 183, 167).

In Italy, politics was "almost exclusively the domain of men" until the 1970s (Ginsborg 1990: 366). The political climate for women's participation was particularly "brutal" (Hellman 1987: 168). Political parties from both the Right and the Left reacted to the mobilization of women with "obstruction, isolation, and ostracism" (Hellman 1987: 169).

Certainly, the restrictions placed upon women, especially in regards to their movement (or lack of it) through public space, influenced feminist politics. The absence of public space for democratic participation, especially the politics of women, further hindered the feminist movement in the South (Hellman 1987: 126). An eccentric gadfly in one of the Belice towns wanted to reach out to women politically; he thought they would be more sympathetic to his criticisms of the entrenched power-holders than were the men. He complained that women did not hear his speeches in the main **piazza**, so to reach them he marched into every **cortile** and side street, stood up on a table he carried under his arm, and held forth. While many thought he was crazy, his point regarding the place of female audiences was valid and accurate and his unconventional means of reaching them effective.

Despite political and spatial impediments to women's mobilization, the feminist movement has enjoyed remarkable

success in the Italian South. The passage of important referenda (e.g., the legalization of divorce in 1974 and abortion in 1981), the well organized resistance to the nuclear base at Comiso in eastern Sicily, and the on-going struggle to establish women's service centers and clinics demonstrate the continuing relevance of feminism in the South. More significant has been the changing consciousness of southern women; women have attained the "skills that [have given them] the confidence to act in the public sphere and to redefine 'women's personal problems' as public issues" (Hellman 1987: 206). Consequently, women have entered the public sphere in ways unimaginable in the past in the traditional agrotown.

The most striking change has occurred in the realm of education. Co-education for elementary grades has signalled the end of sex segregation of children. The rate of illiteracy has always been high in the Mezzogiorno compared to the national average, but it decreased from 25% in 1951 to 6% in 1981. High school attendance has increased during these same three decades from 3% to 10% in the Mezzogiorno (Ginsborg 1990: 440). Greater emphasis on girls' education has helped to swell these figures. In Calatafimi for instance, in the class of twenty children finishing *scuola media* (middle school, with students of approximately 13 years old), only six will continue on to high school; half of those six are girls.

Traditionally women's education was cursory and brief in Sicily, but during the watershed years since 1968, more inclusive rules of access have greatly affected women's opportunities for university training. By 1968, a third of all university students in Italy were women--twice as many as in 1960 (Lumley 1990: 55). Middle-class women received higher education and many trained for professional careers. These are the women who spearheaded the feminist movement in the South. They now work as clerks and professionals outside the home, entering the previously restricted spaces of work such as offices, schools, clinics, and town halls. In fact, some jobs within the bureaucracy of the earthquake reconstruction (e.g. public works departments and housing offices) were set aside specifically for educated women.

Women's work outside the home includes jobs as teachers, office clerks, shopkeepers, agriculturalists and artisans. According census figures for 1981, a quarter of the Sicilian workforce was female. A breakdown of these figures indicates the types of employment outside the home in which women participated. Public administration employed 25% of the Sicilian workforce, with women making up 43% of that. Industry and construction employed 14% of Sicilian workers, with only 3% of working women involved in this sector--probably as office workers, explained a local bureaucrat. (These last numbers are surely greater in the Belice towns.) Women represented 28% of the 16% of the Sicilians employed in commerce, and of the 20% listed as

working in agriculture, 29% were female. (Local census takers warned me that these latter figures were highly exaggerated by respondents in order to attain eligibility for more advantageous pension benefits.) And, women were well represented among the unemployed professionals; of the 17% of those in search of their first job, 39% were women (ISTAT 1985: Tables 5 and 6).

More detailed information about the Belice towns was available from birth records (**Atti di Nascita**), which include information on parents' occupations. Although women giving birth may be the least likely to work outside the home, because of Italy's liberal birth-leave laws many would have retained or planned to retain their jobs at the time of parturition. Furthermore, as people are apt to record occupations differently on some documents due to a labyrinthian tax code, birth records may reveal the most accurate listing of occupations because they are unconnected to tax records. At various intervals since the mid-1960s these indicate a steady decrease in the number of women who list housewife (**casalingua**) as their primary occupation and a corresponding increase in women working outside the home. Significantly, since the early 1970s women have worked less in agriculture and more as teachers and clerks: 13% of women giving birth worked in agriculture in 1978, as contrasted to 6% in 1981 and 2% in 1986. Furthermore, women's increasing role in the labor market

parallels the marked decline in fertility in Italy, including Sicily (Schneider and Schneider 1996: 284-286).

Although poorer women have been less directly involved with the feminist movement, they too have been more active in the labor market since the earthquake. As a consequence of the precarious and lopsided economy (Schneider and Schneider 1976: 207), many Sicilians work in unregulated illegal jobs. **Lavoro nero** (literally "black work," or unregistered employment), taps the reserve of the unemployed, or more specifically, the working "unemployed" who are often women engaged in work in the house. While factory work is still rare in western Sicily, there has been a marked increase in **lavoro nero** among the poorer, less-educated Sicilian women since the national recession of the 1970s.

Lavoro nero frequently depends on local resources and seasonal variations. In different towns of western Sicily it includes jobs in embroidery, sewing of clothes or rugs, flower-tying, and fish processing (Birnbaum 1986: 242). Gusi, a young woman from a lower-middle class family with a high school diploma, sells exquisitely embroidered sheets, pillow cases, and table cloths to travelling merchants for mothers gathering their daughters' **corredo** (trousseau).⁹

9. Mothers begin collecting for their daughters' **corredo** when the girls are still children. These linens constitute a long-term investment by mothers, part of the property a girl brings to the family of procreation at marriage. Finely embroidered sheets can cost the girl's family thousands of dollars.

Domestic space is utilized for **lavoro nero**, at no cost to the merchant or middleman, for the piecework production of market goods. This kind of home-based work is highly exploitative; because of its private nature, neither state regulations nor benefits and services apply to the work force. Ironically, women's involvement with **lavoro nero** has meant the increasing privatization of their daily lives as the low-paid piecework of **lavoro nero** is added to the unaltered responsibilities of housework.

Overall, the feminist movement and the recent economic changes have had different consequences for the different classes of western Sicilian women. Middle-class women with college educations and professional jobs have challenged the gender segregated patterns of the traditional agrotown by entering the public space of formerly male workplaces. Their homes are reserved for domestic activities associated with social reproduction. By contrast, poor women have been forced by economic necessity to retreat further into the private zone, combining domestic work with piecework production in the house. Most working women shoulder the double duty of unpaid housework and childcare in addition to their paid work as professionals or pieceworkers. It is in this context of changing work patterns that women and their families have reacted to the new structures of domestic space provided by the state in the course of reconstruction after the earthquake.

5. NEW HOUSING IN RECONSTRUCTED TOWNS

The new spatial arrangements of the reconstructed settlements little resemble the form of the traditional agrotown. Reconstructed towns and neighborhoods instead recall English New Towns and American postwar suburban developments in their design and structures of social segregation (see Chapters IV and V). Overall there is a very different feeling of architectural space and environmental context. The old towns are jam packed with buildings of all sizes, narrow streets, and crooked alleyways; panoramic vistas across the countryside are glimpsed from the edges of town. By contrast, in the new towns one is everywhere confronted with long views of huge empty areas, broken up by detached cement structures in various stages of construction. Curving boulevards, with concrete houses set back behind iron-grill gates and driveways into dusty yards, give the reconstructed towns and neighborhoods an expansive, vacant look. Due to a combination of factors--new anti-seismic design codes, modernist ideals promulgated in contemporary planning thought, and the incompleteness of reconstruction--the new towns were built *ad ampio respiro*, or as wide-open breathing spaces. The new towns are arranged without reference to the traditional patterns of public-private and male-female space of the agrotown. The common assumption shared by most informants was that those who planned the Belize reconstruction were northerners who failed to

understand or respect southerners and their culture. While the actual origins of planners may not have been verified or even truly significant, it is important that they were perceived as outsiders. More to the point, they created town plans that were foreign, based on models developed in and appropriate to industrialized areas of north-western Europe and the United States (see Chapter IV for a more detailed discussion on urban planning).

The reconstructed settlements were clearly not designed with the customs and traditions of the earthquake victims in mind. I would argue that the planners hired by the state did not intentionally subvert the patterns of male-female space of the traditional agrotown. In fact, in most cases, they did little to understand or acquaint themselves with the socioeconomic conditions and settlement patterns of the inhabitants, the victims of the earthquake (De Bonis 1979: 139). Instead, the planners, mostly men, had little experience with the Mediterranean ideologies of honor and shame. They overlooked the historical spatial patterns associated with gender segregation, with social interaction, and with men's and women's employment (or lack of it) inside and outside the house.¹⁰

10. Men dominated the planning process after the earthquake. Those hired to officially evaluate the damaged areas and its needs were overwhelmingly men: of the 16 architects, engineers, and professors involved only one was a woman. Regarding the social aspects of these preliminary investigations (*Direzione attività sociali*), women were better represented, with eight of the 23 participants. But, none of the 12 experts hired for technical aspects of reconstruction planning were women. While the territorial

The planners responsible for the new town designs and established the building codes and zoning regulations used an urban middle-class model of domestic space. This model presumed parallel patterns of men's and women's movement through the town's public space, the outside employment of women, and consequently the consumption of domestic necessities on the commercial market. As a consequence, the new space was built to accommodate these qualitatively different economic and social circumstances.

Most dramatically altered are the arrangements of social space; first, the public space of men has assumed a new shape in the reconstructed towns. There is no longer a central axis along which the institutional, commercial and social life of men can unfold; the main streets and **piazze**, where men in the old town exchange news, network for jobs, and pass the time, have no representation in the new towns. While the basic functional components of the old towns-- churches, schools, shopping districts, government buildings, infrastructure, and housing--are present, they take on a totally new form in the reconstructed towns (see, for example, Figure 7). The open spaces there are not

plans were drawn up exclusively by men, one of the 11 architects and engineers used to create the individual town plans was a woman. The large-scale infrastructural works financed by the state were designed solely by men. Women comprised 11 of the 121 professionals involved in the design of individual public buildings such as schools, nurseries, social centers, and town halls. Finally, all of the directors and administrators of the ISES agency were men. (These figures were culled from ISES 1972 and Renna 1979: 473-477.)

linked to bars, town buildings, and other social areas that frequently spill out into the public spaces of the old town. They stand alone in monumental splendor, as architectural statements.

It is no surprise that the traditional patterns of gender segregation are affected. Public institutional buildings, for example, were dispersed up and down the **corso**. Now, in the new settlements, the youth clubs, party headquarters, museums, and civic organizations are often in a single building set apart from others. The **circoli**, so central in the agrotown, barely exist in the reconstructed areas. **Piazze** in the new towns are no longer public areas, having lost their direct connection to the street in favor of exclusive relationships to surrounding buildings. The open areas in the reconstructed towns are more a part of the individual building facades than the street, a subtle yet significant distinction that renders these large and empty spaces private and unwelcoming to passing pedestrian traffic.

The new commercial districts have not reproduced the old towns' pattern of gender-segregated shopping areas. Rather, they are set apart from both the administrative buildings and the residential areas, demanding access by automobile. These commercial areas close in on themselves, more like the sheltered **agora** of ancient Greece than the agrotown **corso** with its continual flow of pedestrian and car traffic. While the shopping area of the **corso** had many

functions, the commercial centers of the new towns are solely commercial; they operate only as locales to buy and sell manufactured goods.

This singularity of purpose is expressed in design. Structural arrangement and stylistic details of the new commercial zones act as barriers that inhibit easy movement and social interaction. In the shopping area of Montevago, for instance, the four closed walls surrounding the shopping center are broken up only by the occasional window, tiny and high over one's head (Renna et. al. 1979: 297-298). Storefronts line the sides of the square, facing one another. Within Montevago's commercial block is a dense forest of reinforced concrete pillars, topped by a low, imposing, checkerboard ceiling of concrete. Needless to say, this oppressive area is rarely used, and then only for shopping. Men spend little time in the new commercial areas, perhaps because the defining activity--consuming--is so spatially circumscribed. It is difficult to combine shopping with socializing, networking, seeing and being seen. Nor does it serve as an area to pass through in order to reach other areas, as it is enclosed and distant from the rest of the settlement. This begs the question: Did the man who designed this shopping area, the architect Guido D'Aquino, understand the relationship between consumption and the social relations between men and women in the agrotown? If so, did he disregard it, disapprove of it, or want to alter it?

There are various ways to interpret the design of new shopping areas. As we found in the last chapter, it is difficult to isolate the intentions and motivations behind the design decisions of planners. Was the uniformity of design in Montevago's commercial center the result of an attempt to avoid the influence of special interests of some shopkeepers over others? Was it more democratic to give all shopkeepers equal size, equivalent location, and similar facades? Or, more generally, were the planners of these new areas trying to generate increased dependence on the commercial market?

While there was a concerted attempt to encourage commercial consumption in the Belice, it appears from the inappropriate design of some of the commercial centers that there was little coordination in the effort. These commercial zones may represent a place for both sexes to shop together, increasing the capacity for consumption by doubling the number of shoppers theoretically using the space. Or, they may represent an activity and place to which people now must drive, thereby perpetuating increased reliance upon the automobile.

Interviews with architects and planners failed unequivocally to resolve these questions. Only after prodding, ten of thirteen said the commercial zones were designed with cost and convenience the foremost considerations. In the absence of well-articulated principles regarding the design of consumption areas, most

likely the design of shopping areas instead reflects a codified knowledge in the training of planners. Models from international Modernist style might have been used by default.

One can only speculate how this commercial space will be used in the future. Will it become a place of men's information and exchange, detached from the traffic of the community? Will it retain its singular function as a space of consumption? It remains an open question how the inhabitants will use it, and in so doing change it.

Further complicating the uses of the commercial zone is and increasingly will be the accessibility afforded by the automobile. By now most adult women have learned to drive. Moreover, society approves, considering them to be well protected and free of movement in a car. Forced to drive more often in the new towns than in the old, women more easily can and do enter the public space to consume than they did previously. Like men, they enter and leave again immediately, after completing the given task.

It is most likely that the Belice planners relied on the popular models of commercial space derived from the United States. With the rise of the department stores in North American cities in the late 1800s, women were first encouraged to use (and eventually dominate) the commercial areas associated with consumption (Barth 1980: 181). The great spread of malls during the last twenty years only propelled this tendency for women in the United States to

increasingly assume control over the now market-dependent household economy (Cohen 1996; See Jackson 1996: 1119).

In some areas of the new settlements, apartment blocks squat on eight-foot high concrete pilons. The shadowy ground floor is reserved for parking. While the old towns were built on the scale of pedestrians and beasts of burden, the movement and storage of the automobile determine the design and dimensions of the new towns. Residents of the new town are compelled to own cars, as the new settlements were both spread out and distant from the old town.

The automobile industry has assumed a central place in the postwar Italian economy. Internationally important automakers, such as FIAT and Lancia and related industries such as Pirelli (rubber) and Italsider (steel), have profitted from close involvement with government policy. Although the state has generally favored the industry, the different levels of administration (local, national, and supranational--the European Union) have often resulted in contradictory policies. While the Ministry of Public Works has enthusiastically undertaken ambitious road construction projects, gasoline taxes remain very high. While manufacturers enjoy sweet deals in tax subsidies and tariff restrictions on competitors, some cities have effectively limited automobile use in their historic centers (an early example was Florence's Blue Zone).

Automobile ownership has greatly increased since the early 1960s (Ginsborg 1990: 433). This is especially so in Sicily since the earthquake, as roads were built furiously while public transportation was totally ignored. State housing projects and cooperatives all accommodate privately-owned cars with garages and carports often constituting the ground floor or the front and back areas of the housing lot. In fact, it might be argued that space for the automobile has replaced women's work space, the **cortile**, as parking areas have been often located in the semi-public area between the street and the house.

The semi-private and private spaces of women in the neighborhoods and the houses have also been dramatically altered in the new towns. These towns were each planned as a total unit, an ensemble so to speak, with little room for individual variation. They all had standardized housing projects made of reinforced concrete, which were more similar to housing estates on the peripheries of cities of the Italian North than to those Sicilian towns they were built to replace. While the new towns were long anticipated by those affected by the earthquake, the inhabitants had little input to their structure or design. It is therefore not surprising that local women found the forms of new neighborhoods and new housing to be inappropriate in significant ways.

The neighborhood streets and **cortili** in which women work, pass along information, and watch children, were

changed beyond recognition or absent altogether in the new towns (see Figure 20). Courtyards and open areas between houses and streets, customarily the central locales of women's neighborhood networking and domestic production, were entirely absent in the new towns. They have been replaced by gated yards, enclosed entryways, and parking zones, all serving to separate the house from the street. Private domestic space was increasingly detached from the surrounding semi-public space; boundaries were more rigidly drawn. Entry or exit between private and semi-public areas was no longer a simple question of stepping between kitchen doorway and courtyard or street, but of crossing the horizontal and vertical barriers of gates, yards, buzzers, entryways, stairs, and parking lots. The balcony, formerly a kind of elevated courtyard, was now placed at odd angles, facing away from other balconies, making simple conversation between households awkward or impossible in the new towns.

The new house, urban and bourgeois in tone, emphasizes the privacy of an isolated nuclear family. Its domestic spatial arrangements differ in important ways from the earlier housing designs of the agrotown. The kitchen in the new housing areas is very small, often a mere adjunct to the dining rooms and aptly called the "cooking corner" (**angolo cottura**). It is placed at the back of the house, remote from streets and public thoroughfares. As a result of these architectural changes, women in the new

settlements found themselves more confined to the crowded private interiors of the house. Tasks that were once done cooperatively in the semi-public areas adjoining the house cannot be achieved communally in the new towns and neighborhoods, nor can they be easily accomplished in the new cooking corners. Female inhabitants often complained of loneliness and the constant desire to drive to town to visit with friends and family.

What oriented planning thought in the design of these kitchens, so poorly suited to the needs and wants of the Sicilian women? Was it an unquestioned acceptance of modernization ideals? The decline of women's networks and weakening of mutual aid arrangements has been linked to modernization throughout Europe. For instance, Harriet Rosenberg (1988: 194) and Sally Cole (1991: 123, 164) discuss the consequences of industrial development in Alpine France and coastal Portugal, respectively. Women's networks and rituals of unity have eroded as a result of increased competition and envy between families caught up in the tandem processes of industrialization and commoditization. Did planners of the Belice assume that industrialization and commodified consumption structured the economy of the western Sicilian interior? Did they predict the declining importance of women's networks and plan their housing accordingly?

The models used for the new towns were borrowed from settlements designed for bourgeois inhabitants in northern

Europe and the United States. Writing at the time of the earthquake, Vittorio Gregotti, the renowned architect, argued that planners everywhere in Italy had as their overarching goal to standardize house form, improve taste (in either case, to elevate class-based consumer preferences), and increase consumption by the masses (Gregotti 1968: 79). Precisely these goals appear to have influenced the radical transformation of the dimensions and arrangements of public, semi-public, and private space in the new Belice settlements. In many important respects, the new towns were planned for small families in which both parents work outside the home, although not in agriculture. The new housing was designed for a small, urban, middle-class family as a place to consume, retreat from work, and relax from the pressures of their daily employment (see Frykman and Lofgren [1989] on the development of this bourgeois ideal regarding residence).

We have seen that the public space of business in the new towns is no longer open to the back and forth traffic of daily routines so central to traditions of men's politics and social life. Instead, business space has become exclusively commercial with decisively marked physical boundaries. Furthermore, the semi-public spaces of women's work and social exchange are absent or inaccessible in the new towns. Consideration of women's patterns of shared housework and *lavoro nero* jobs was either absent or rejected as undesirable. The new houses

were designed for employed women who would fulfill domestic requirements on the market, consuming manufactured household products, clothes, linens, and processed foodstuffs. But lack of employment opportunities meant that few women obtained job outside of the home and consequently few could afford to fulfill domestic needs from the marketplace. We might therefore expect the reactions of inhabitants to these new spatial arrangements to be conflictual and problematic.

6. WOMEN'S DIFFERENT REACTIONS TO NEW HOUSING

Belice residents questioned the national architectural and planning patterns represented in the reconstructed towns. Specific aspects of housing were rejected as inappropriate and wrong. Sicilians, especially Sicilian women, challenged and resisted this form of intergration into the national culture of modernization and consumption.

The housing of the reconstructed towns was unsuitable in various ways for the inhabitants of the agrotowns of western Sicily. Both housewives and professional women found the new domestic space unsatisfactory, although for different reasons. On the one hand, its design precluded home production for women engaged in housework and **lavoro nero**. On the other, its uniformity and rules prohibiting modifications failed to fulfill the goals of professional women for a residence that was simultaneously a place of privacy, leisure, and display of class status. While the

first group of women found it necessary to modify the state-provided housing, professional women took the more dramatic and unprecedented step of rejecting the agglomerated towns entirely, both new and old, and moving to the countryside. I discuss the two class-specific reactions in turn.

Prior to the economic miracle and the earthquake reconstruction, lower-class women were forced to compromise their honor by working outside the home as fieldhands, domestics, midwives, or herbalists. Although the countryside was considered dangerous, especially for women, many often passed part of the year in the rural farmhouse (the *baglio*). They worked in agriculture in peak times, especially during the harvest, feeding the workers and laboring in the fields themselves. This need to work, especially in the countryside, damaged the social reputations of poor women and men. They were evaluated by others as suffering such acute impoverishment as to force their women to compromise their honor by defying ideals of behavior and use of space. That is, poor women could not maintain middle-class models of women's behavior with its spatial restrictions: they had to enter public spaces of work outside the more private, secluded house and courtyard.

The postwar economy brought about major changes in the employment structure; as many left to work in the booming industries of northern Italy and Europe, the remaining

workforce in Sicily found its bargaining position much improved. Only with the relative economic prosperity of the postwar period did lower-class women return to the confines of the house for work. Dedication of one's work to just the family in one's own home was viewed as a way to restore and maintain the family honor.

Most of the residents of the state housing projects, the **case popolari**, in the new towns came from the class of poor agriculturalists. They were satisfied that new housing was provided after long delays, but they ignored the building codes in order to make their housing more appropriate to their own particular needs and expectations. Transforming garages and balconies into kitchens and bedrooms, they modified their housing to better accommodate the requirements associated with women's work and social space. Lacking the financial wherewithall to consider options other than state-provided housing, those living in **case popolari** in the new and old towns still view concentrated settlements as an essential feature of civility.

Traditional ideas of how men and women should occupy space in town remained important in the conduct of their everyday lives. Women of the lower classes still attempt to avoid male public spaces--the **piazza** and the **corso**--whenever possible. They often criticize upper-middle class women for working in jobs outside the home and entering these spaces on a regular basis. Professional women are

occasionally accused of flaunting themselves in male arenas. Furthermore, outside employment is viewed by some as a form of family neglect. (It remains a question if poor women negatively evaluate professional women as an expression of resentment at their own lack of job opportunities outside the home.) A complex irony has emerged: poor women have now achieved the traditional norms associated with female honor set by the bourgeoisie in the early part of the century, while contemporary professional women work both inside and outside the home, as did many of the poorest women during the prewar era. Essentially, poorer women sanction richer women for not living up to the ideals the poor have associated with the elite.

Many women who have moved into the modernist reconstruction projects from the old town have expressed dissatisfaction with the increasingly privatized domestic space. These non-professional women still must do housework to maintain the family: making the year's supply of tomato sauce, drying and processing nuts and fruits for Christmas sweets, embroidering sheets and pillowcases for daughters' trousseaus, or turning out piecework. More importantly, their social power continues to rest, in large part, on the community of women as earlier constituted in the courtyards or street fronts of the agrotown. They still want to discuss the village news with neighboring women, since their access to the male space of the *corso* remains limited not only by their work requirements and

their moral codes of proper female behavior, but by the social and physical distance of their new neighborhoods from the center of town.

These women have modified (and continue to do so) their houses in an attempt to reconstitute the spatial environment conducive to home production, communal work, and the social interchange of neighborhood networks. Despite the fact that these new houses are often larger, the women prefer to work together in the street or courtyard. As most modifications are prohibited, many risk fines to transform street-level garages into second kitchens for everyday use, storage areas, and seasonal home-production activities. Garages lend themselves to modification as they are usually empty and unfinished. With their corrugated steel doors open, these kitchen-garages become semi-public spaces like courtyards; passing women can pull up chairs, talk, sew, watch children, and prepare food together. Thus, reconstituting the spatial and social patterns of the old town has emerged as an important goal for many new town residents.

Many go to great lengths to achieve the second kitchen, even when the rules and regulations regarding state-provided housing add another layer of difficulty to the process of modification. In some of the popular housing projects, for example, the garage is distant from the house, across a yard or submerged in a hillside as a half-floor. The locations of these garages make them less

suitable as semi-public buffer zones between interior domestic space and the public street. Despite their detached locations however, women still strive to transform them into second kitchens, so strong is their desire to recreate an area for companionship and shared work, to replicate their traditional patterns of work and social space.

Other aspects of the new space in the reconstructed towns are also considered objectionable. For instance, the middle-class nuclear family of four (parents and one or two children), which the planners expected to inhabit new housing, does not conform to the western Sicilian reality. Households are often larger, as the married couple is joined by more than two children or a grandparent. Again risking fines, residents modify the housing to fulfill their particular needs. Inhabitants in the state subsidized housing, for example, have increased their interior space and the number of separate bedrooms by closing in the rarely used balconies. Breaking the rules of the government housing policy for the sake of propriety, inhabitants claim children of different sexes and grandparents need separate bedrooms. Alternatively, some have enclosed balconies to increase the size and prestige of the formal day areas of living or dining rooms.

Home modifications in the housing projects can directly bear on ideologies regarding women's behavior and honor. Ina was a helpful informant, 25 years old and of

working-class origins. She is pleased to live with her widowed father and younger brothers in a popular housing project. She has installed a hot plate and a sink in the ground-floor garage to better adapt it for cooking. Tired of sharing a bedroom with a brother, she closed in the corner balcony to make herself a private bedroom.

Ina's attempt to carve out her own space seems odd to the foreign observer, however, since she inherited the right to her grandmother's house in the same housing project. When asked why she risked fines and legal troubles for modifying her father's house, she referred to the moral code regarding women and space. "Daughters and windows are always in danger" (**Figlie e vetri son sempre in pericolo**), she said, quoting a proverb about women's vulnerability. She added, "it wouldn't be right to be all alone." When questioned about actual dangers, she agreed she was worried less about her personal safety in that crowded and well supervised neighborhood than about people criticizing her and her father for improper behavior. Living alone would indicate her potential sexual freedom and her father's and brothers' lack of concern regarding her chastity and therefore their honor. The house a few doors away will remain unused, empty but for the furniture Ina has collected in case she one day marries.

Another informant, Carmela, lives with her young sons, husband, and mother in a second-story apartment in the reconstructed zone. She too has transformed the garage

into a kitchen, but uses it primarily for storage and seasonal food preparation. Although she worked for years in a cafe before marriage, she now avoids leaving the house, to the point of buying most of the family food from travelling vendors whose goods she hoists up in a basket to her kitchen. She explained: "It doesn't seem right. I have a family to care for; people would think I was neglectful if I went traipsing about town." This self-imposed seclusion is common, especially among women like Carmela who have faced social condemnation.

Aside from the majority of women who work at home and live in the new housing projects, a minority of women have received a university education and work outside the home. They have often assumed the new jobs associated with reconstruction in local government offices or building firms. Or, they work as professionals in the health or education sectors. These women discuss their entry into the public spaces of offices, the *corso*, and even the cafes, in terms of a conscious challenge to past cultural norms regarding the exclusivity of male domains. (*Circoli* remain strictly off limits to women.) These women see themselves as the local forerunners of the feminist movement. "We brought feminist consciousness to this tiny town," boasted one proudly. They recount the insulting remarks made to them by men and women alike, reassuring me that only the poor, uneducated, and provincial would stoop

so low as to criticize their courageous conquest of public space and their bold defiance of outdated moral codes.

These are the women who, with their families, have begun to reject town residence in favor of dispersed settlement in the countryside. Although this alternative was not offered as part of the plans for reconstructed settlements, it is a possibility permitted by the new territorial zoning plans and by the recent provision of rural infrastructure including electrical lines and decent roads.

Residential dispersion has occurred in two phases. Since the late 1970s, the upper-middle, then the middle classes have begun in earnest to build country houses for summer residence. Prior to the earthquake, farmhouses were being abandoned throughout the Sicilian countryside. The typical rural house at that time was little more than a tool shed--25 to 30 square meters, with neither windows nor plumbing facilities (Caldo 1974: 53). Now the ring of agricultural land around the old and new towns has been transformed by the rapid spread of detached, relatively dispersed villas across the landscape.

In these villas, professionals and their families enjoy a few months of privacy and the selective appreciation of the peasant heritage. For example, the architectural details of these villas often imitate elements of rustic buildings with wooden archways and wood-burning bread ovens, even though they are specifically

designed for non-agriculturalists in pursuit of leisure, free from the crowded conditions of surveillance and social control of the neighborhoods of the town. This new pattern of settlement--a winter residence for work and town living, a summer residence for recreation and country living--served as the precedent for a more dramatic, if still uncommon, move to permanently relocate in the countryside.

Professional women and their families were the first to move out of town. These women enjoy access to social information of the public sphere by virtue of their professional jobs outside the home. They do not find it necessary to establish communal relationships afforded by housing in the agglomerated settlement. Nor do they want to modify new housing in reconstructed settlements to better utilize domestic work space and neighborhood networks.

This group of women may put up tomato sauce or embroider in their spare time, not out of economic necessity but to savour the authentic experience of home production. Although they can easily afford commercially produced goods, they express a lively appreciation of Sicilian crafts and foods. They do not participate in labor exchange networks with other women, and they can easily purchase commercially prepared foodstuffs and linens. They can afford to hire others to help with housework and childcare. Some women rely on the efforts of their mothers and sisters, unemployed in the formal labor

market, to provide the household with homemade products and childcare. (Lacking a word in Sicilian or Italian for a paid childcare provider, they use the American word, **la babysitter.**)

It is in this context that professional women and their families have moved out of the centralized towns to the suburban rings around them. Ironically, these women, who were the most influenced by feminism and thus more likely to be working for wages, are not linked to the communal networks of women promoted in the feminist program. Instead, when not working their outside jobs, they have retreated into the more isolated, privatized, nuclear family, an institution eschewed by many feminist thinkers.¹¹ Furthermore, because men in western Sicily do not take much responsibility for housework, professional women often find themselves also maintaining the house and family.¹²

11. Feminists in Italy have long recognized the isolating, hidden, and exploitative nature of domestic work. Radical theoreticians demanded wages for housework to uncover its real nature as disguised social reproduction (Dalla Costa and James 1972). This goal has remained far out of reach for Italian housewives, yet these educated women have achieved the related goal of wages for professional work.

12. Sally Cole (1991) notes similar consequences in the more industrialized coastal Portugal, where many poorer women are working for wages in factories while simultaneously maintaining the household and caring for children. In many cases economic development has meant double duty for women: we find it so for factory workers in rural Portugal and for poor women engaged in **lavoro nero** in western Sicily, as well as for middle-class professional women.

The decision of a professional couple to settle permanently in what was once the unpopulated agricultural hinterland of Salemi, as well as the opposition they encountered from friends and family, indicate slowly changing conceptions of residence, at least among a small segment of the population. As the wife, Giovanna, explained, the comforts associated with classic suburban living--gardens, privacy, quiet, and safe play areas for children--appealed to her. Working in town, both she and her husband were tired of constant interaction with townspeople by the end of the day. She was particularly attracted to the "privacy" (they use the English word, indicating the foreignness of the concept in the agrotown) their country house afforded. Coming home from work she was assured peace and quiet, freedom from the surveillance of the town gossips, and relative safety from impromptu visits from neighbors and conversations across balconies. She and her husband had no intention, however, of returning to the peasant occupations of their parents and grandparents. For this couple, the country no longer connoted hard work in lonely fields, but a new residential alternative. They saw themselves linked to an international culture of suburban living by virtue of their particular housing preference. As a consequence of their professional employment outside the home, they felt capable, even propelled to relocate away from the concentrated settlements.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I have discussed the ways settlement transformation and variations in women's employment opportunities have influenced notions of male and female space. In the old towns men and women used and continue to use public and private spaces differently, in accordance with specific work requirements and cultural constructs regarding honor and shame. But, the feminist movement, new educational opportunities, changing employment structures, and huge amounts of state money in the area have complicated the gendered use of space in the context of settlement transformation.

In this historical context we can better understand the clash between the residential ideals of the richer and poorer women. The move to the countryside of professional women and their families is incomprehensible to many poorer women. The countryside is still seen by many as a place of male agricultural employment. It is considered distant from the important networks of female kin, neighbors, and friends. Ina and Carmela, like many poor women living in the new housing projects, view themselves as the true bearers of an authentic cultural tradition and denigrate the more educated women for being seduced by foreign, superficial, and ultimately destructive urban moral codes.

As educated women have begun to enter the workforce, they have contradicted the ideals of male exclusivity in public spaces. These women see their conquest of public

space as a model to be emulated by all other women, especially the uneducated and poor women. They think it their responsibility to introduce and enact modern ideals of sexual equality to their provincial neighbors still living under a shadow of traditional patriarchy. They recognize themselves as a vanguard for the rights of women. These women encourage their daughters to enter the public arenas of the town and scoff at women who restrict their daughters' movements.

These professional women and their families are pursuing a new residential option in the Belice by settling permanently in the countryside. They are leaving the agglomerated agrotowns and reconstructed areas because they find life there constricted. They have not only contested the old moral codes regarding sexual geography. They have physically removed themselves from the particular settlement type associated with the enforcement of these codes in their attempt to establish new patterns of social behavior in different spaces.

In sum, in the Belice Valley today we find two different tendencies at work regarding gender and space, each associated with a specific class position and set of possibilities. Using modifications, poorer women have challenged the bourgeois, urbane arrangements of domestic space provided by the architects of the state, but have accepted the model of public-private restrictions on gender assumed in the past by bourgeois Sicilians. Professional

women, by contrast, claim to challenge the patterns of sex-segregated space and have done so by abandoning this space to establish their domestic environment outside the town. Thus, the attempt to challenge and transform the architecture of gender in the Belice settlements has ultimately resulted in patterns of increased architectural difference and geographical distance further separating poor and middle-class women.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

This study has sought to demonstrate that space matters to anthropological inquiry. In the last decade, intellectual linkages forged between Marxian urban geographers, philosophers, and anthropologists have introduced new ways of looking at the built environment. No longer a neutral backdrop for the enactment of social life, space is seen as active, shaping human agency and in turn shaped by it. Space is an instrument to be used, manipulated, molded, dismantled, and recreated anew in the relationships of social and economic power.

The two questions at the core of this dissertation-- how power relations structure the built environment and how people react to this built environment in ways that both conform to and challenge the determinant power relations-- allow us to approach the topic from a multidisciplinary perspective. Anthropology, in its examination of how societies maintain themselves and evolve, reveals complex relationships between political and economic inequality, culture change, and patterns social behavior. In the words of Eric Wolf, the discipline examines "how the world of meaning and value is related to the sphere of material determinants" (Wolf 1985: x). Marxian geography focuses on urban planning and capitalist forms of real estate as the mechanisms by which these complex relationships are

expressed in the construction and reconstruction of the built environment. In other words, while geography provides an understanding of the structuring of power within the built environment, it is the ethnographic approach of cultural anthropology that captures the everyday experience and expressions of this power, in all of its forms--direct and indirect, intended and unintended, expected and unexpected.

Reconstruction after disaster permitted a specificity not usually afforded planners of settlements, nor students of space and human action. It allowed planners and scholars to by-pass some of the ordinary complexities of gradual urban growth and change. Although the dynamic relationship between the spatial environment and social processes has never had either a set beginning or a final determination, earthquake reconstruction offered a ready starting point for establishing new patterns of settlement and analyzing them. Basically, following the disaster, a geographically bounded population in interior western Sicily needed safe housing to be provided by a single institutional power, the central government.

Effective urban planning and rational economic development was sorely lacking at the time of the earthquake. Many viewed the reconstruction as a good opportunity to counteract both the chaotic patterns of urban growth and local economic underdevelopment and

insecurity. In hindsight, it is clear that this trajectory was not realized.

Negotiations regarding the reconstruction were interactions best seen as expressions of conflict and contest. The earthquakeed population rallied against the slow and inadequate response of the state. The powerful protest movement grew to threaten government authority at a time of general social unrest throughout the country. Specifically, the protestors rejected the government's prerogatives to tax and conscript its population. More generally, the cross-class movement of the Belice attracted national attention by criticizing long-standing patterns of regional inequality and exploitation of the southern workforce.

Fearful that these rebellious ideas and challenging postures would spread throughout the Mezzogiorno, the government refused to allow local people to identify their own priorities, participate in locally sustainable economic development, and direct the process of reconstruction. The state wanted to subdue the politically mobilized population, increase its own control over the daily lives of the citizenry, and perpetuate market-based consumption. The intensified presence of the state as regulatory authority and the commercial market as vehicle of increased consumption took specific forms in the Belice. In all earthquakeed towns, state power came to fully dominate

definitions of land use, particularly urban real estate, zoning codes, and architectural building standards.

Out of the rat's nest of earthquake laws emerged a new legal apparatus and level of state bureaucracy, a new administrative structure that reached all levels of social and domestic life. New towns were designed with distinct types of housing, roughly corresponding to the changing social hierarchy. The government did not have to create distance and divisiveness among the population so recently united in opposition to its policies of regional inequality. The inhabitants have done it themselves, with the new state-mandated housing types serving as the markers of difference and with the new regulated space emphasizing social distance between them.

Housing conditions have been homogenized as a result of massive state spending. While all have attained middle-class residential standards, new patterns of class segregation have been created. A two-tiered hierarchy of distinction has emerged; first, between those living in the esteemed and desirable old towns and those living in the disparaged and objectionable new towns; and second, within the resident population of the new towns, between those in the preferred private housing, those in the satisfactory cooperative housing, and those in the disliked popular housing projects. By assuming a particular direction in the reconstruction--with detached and distant new towns, modernist in style and internally segregated by housing

types--the state successfully dismantled the cross-class opposition movement and diffused the serious threat to the status quo. People were finally housed, although in ways that made them more subject to government control, increasingly distant from each other, and distracted by new consumption patterns.

In designing houses based on bourgeois models that perpetuate market dependence and commercial consumption, government planners failed to acknowledge the ways space was linked to gender and work. The rejection of new housing by women of the lower classes was unexpected. While aspiring to middle-class status, as represented by the state's new housing standards, these women still wanted to engage in productive activities in the home and desired the company of neighboring women while doing so. Breaking the newly imposed laws regulating the built environment, women rebelled against the planners' objectives and modified new residential space to accommodate their own requirements. Some upper-middle class women found the housing in the old and new towns inappropriate for their changing circumstances. Linked to international culture and economy through education and profession, these women rejected traditional and state provided housing in favor of suburban and ex-urban residence. These women resist the full dependence on the commercial market for domestic products as well, but more by choice than necessity.

While doing fieldwork in the 1980s, Belice residents felt encouraged by the high levels of employment associated with the reconstruction. Returning for a short visit in 1996, as the reconstruction came close to completion, I found the mood much changed. Parents now fear that despite advanced education, their children lack opportunities for local employment. They worry that their children will have to emigrate again for low-paid work as masons and construction workers. With unemployment high elsewhere in Europe and resentment growing in northern Italy against Southerners, even emigration does not seem a viable option.

Without productive economic development, the future of the Belice region looks uncertain, even critical. Levels of consumption have far outpaced levels of production. Sicily must import wood, agricultural products, and fish to sustain consumer demand (*Giornale di Sicilia* 25 June 1996). In terms of housing, it is said that in 1950 there were six people to a room, whereas now there are six rooms per person. Although stated as a rhetorical exaggeration, there is some truth to the claim; there has been an explosion in residential construction in western Sicily during the past three decades. Many have rebuilt their town houses, while reserving their housing lots and contributions in the new zones for their children. Second home construction is by now de rigueur as the bourgeoisie is swelled by returning emigrants and remunerative employment associated with reconstruction. Old town

centers, although prized as real estate, are losing their historic significance as people tear down old houses and put up modern, cement structures more in keeping with the popular international models of bourgeois residence.

Ironically, as many areas of the capitalist West begin to recognize the value of historic preservation, people in western Sicily continue to furiously demolish what is left of characteristic architecture in order to rebuild in undifferentiated and generic styles.

How accurate will the Sicilian claim, **America ca semmu**, be in the future? Like the uncontrolled urban growth in the United States, the swift overbuilding of western Sicily has been guided by the search for profits in real estate and construction. Important principles--such as local self-determination, economic self-sufficiency, and an emphasis on long-term public benefit over short-term individual gain--are especially well suited to a responsible and effective urban planning agenda, and yet have been conspicuously absent in the Sicilian experience of reconstruction.

In final analysis, the reconstruction of the Belice Valley epitomized particularly abrupt changes in lifestyle and social relations. From donkey town to dormitory, the cold stark Modernism of planners' ideals has propelled a pre-industrial population into post-industrial spaces. What were unified towns of rural producers have increasingly become mere residential quarters for people

evermore dependent on state subsidies and foreign labor markets. The Belice population wanted not only houses but the job opportunities that would provide the wherewithall to live in their rebuilt homes. Inhabitants now live in settlements where agricultural production has declined, with no visible productive alternative to take its place. In their stylistic and functional uniformity, the new towns resemble many other communities throughout the capitalist world economy reduced solely to function as places of social reproduction. And yet, the Belice residents have struggled since 15 January 1968 to maintain their singular identity, to represent their own interests, to rebuild their own towns. As they live in these new towns, their commitment to self-determination and change will continue to find expression in the changing built environment.



Figure 1 Map of Western Sicily, Earthquake Epicenter Circled (Adapted from Blok 1974: 1)



Figure 2 Map of Calatafimi, Old Town
(Renna et. al. 1979: 211)

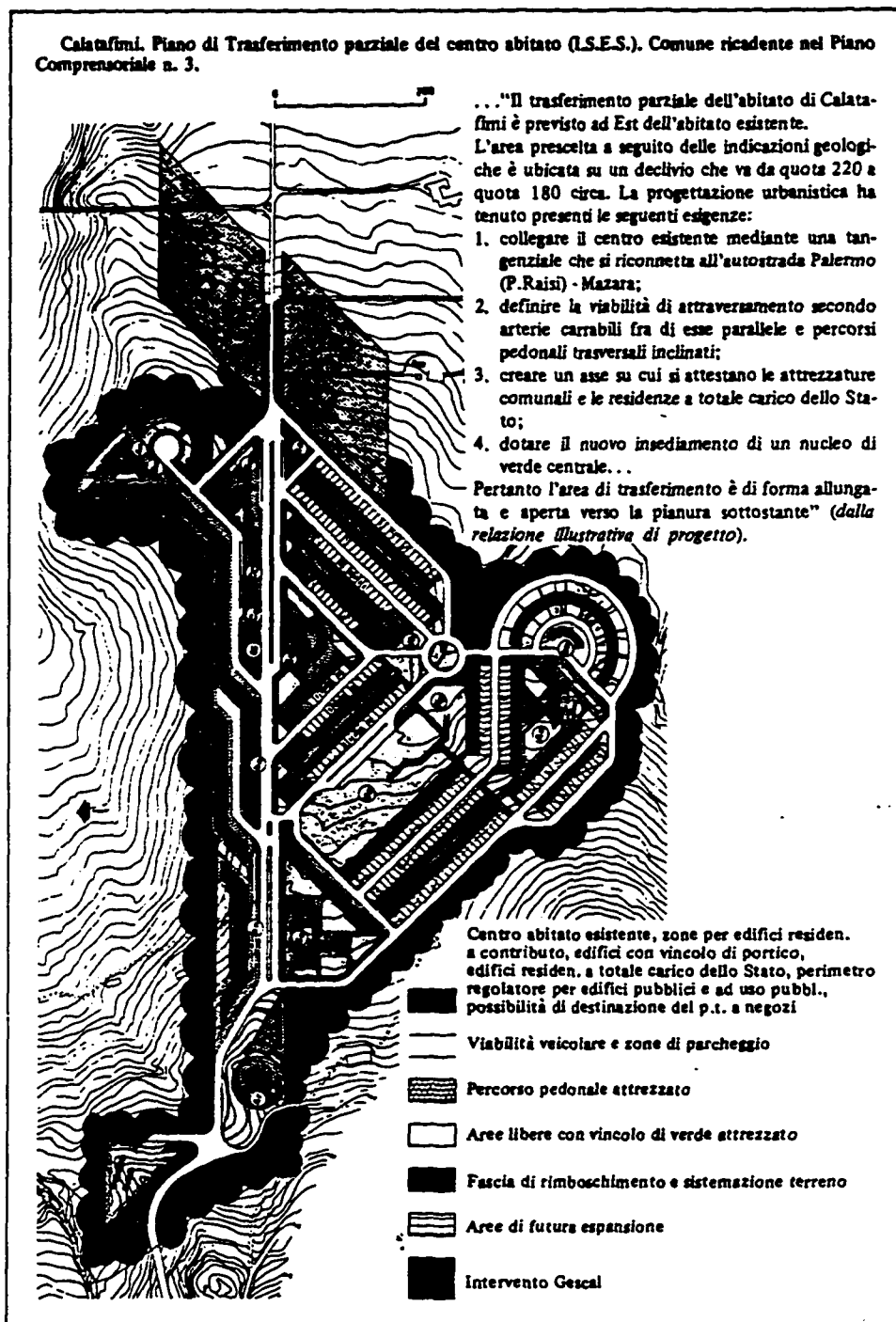


Figure 3 ISES Plan: New Zone, Sasi, Calatafimi (Renna et. al. 1979: 214)

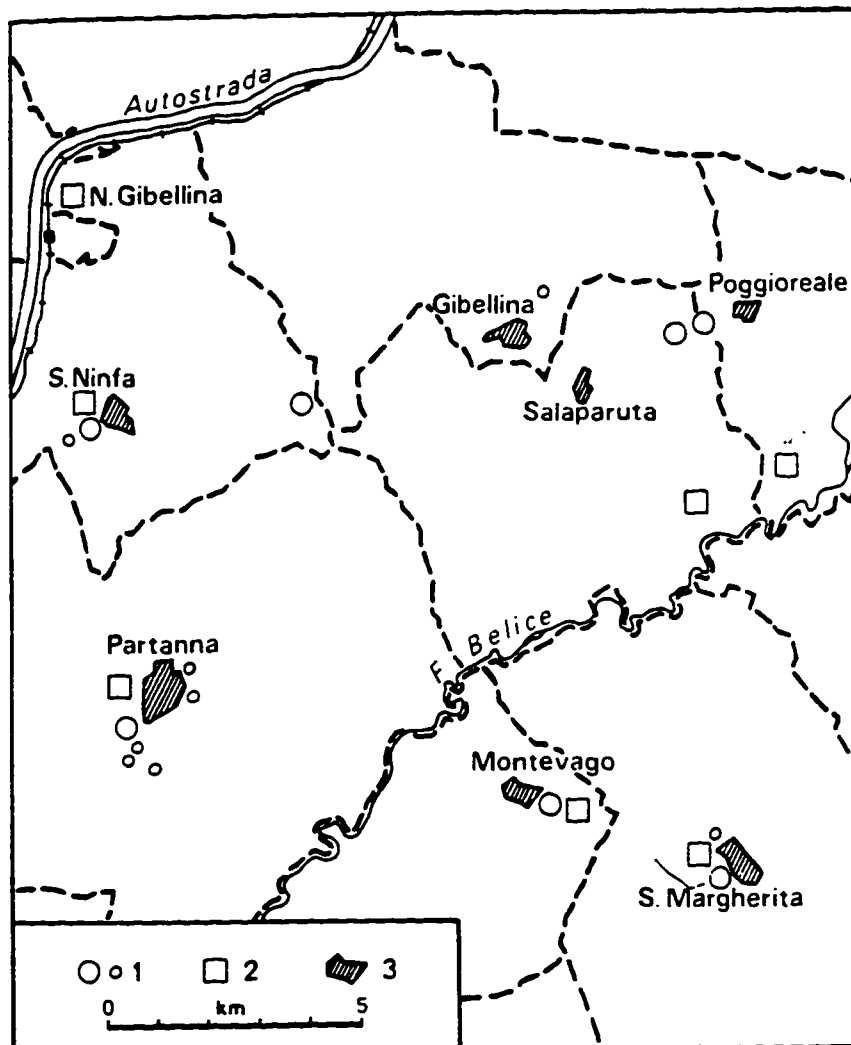


Figure 4 Map of the Belice Towns in Epicenter:
Baraccopoli, New Centers, and Old Towns
 (Caldo 1974: 59)

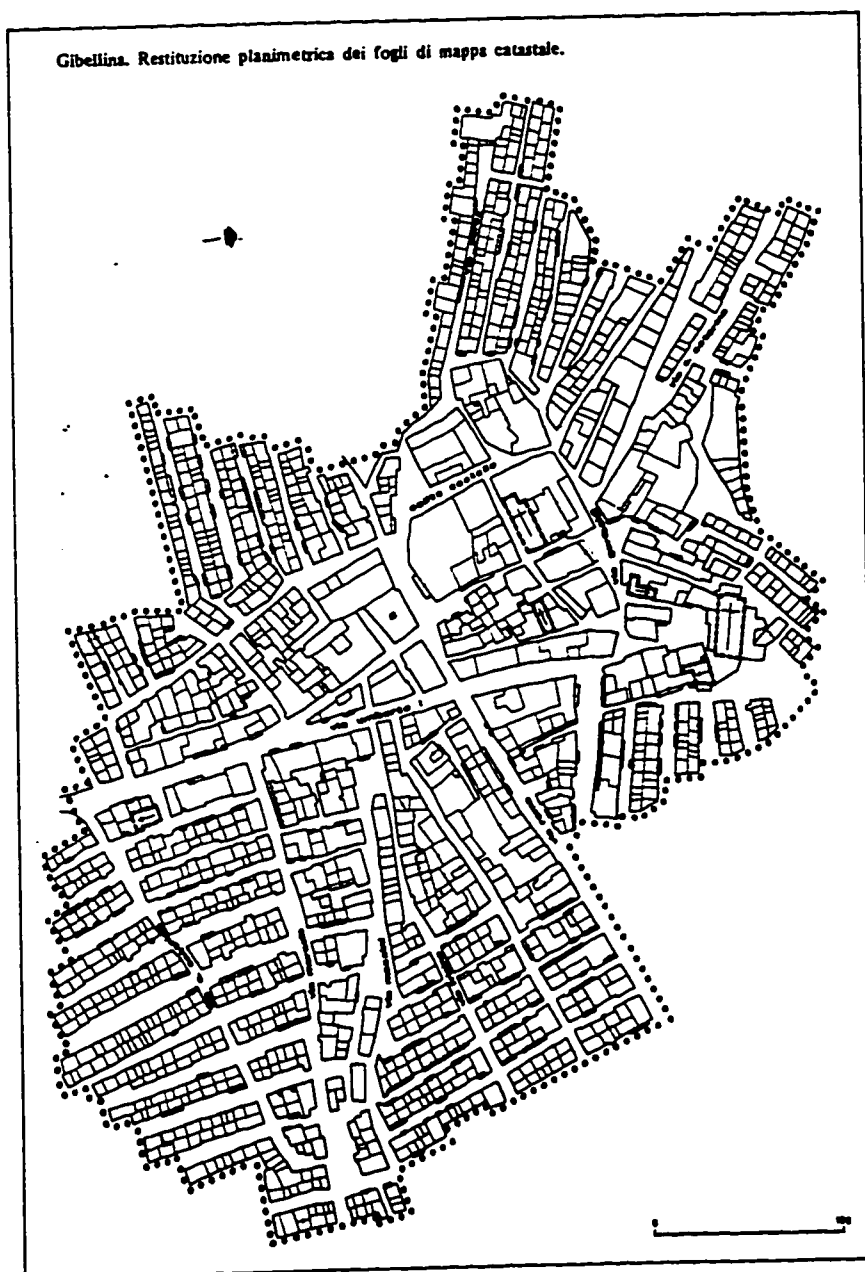


Figure 5 Map of Gibellina, Old Town
(Renna et. al. 1979: 255)

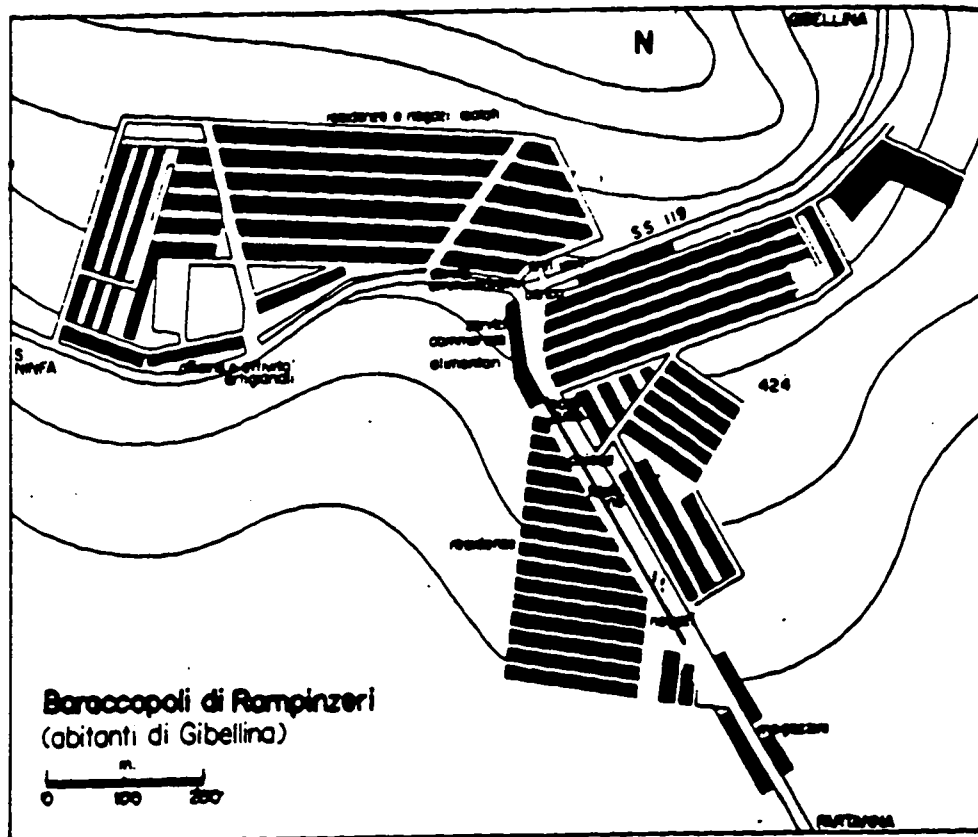


Figure 6 Map of Rampinzeri: Baraccoplo for Gibellina
(Cagnardi 1981: 92)

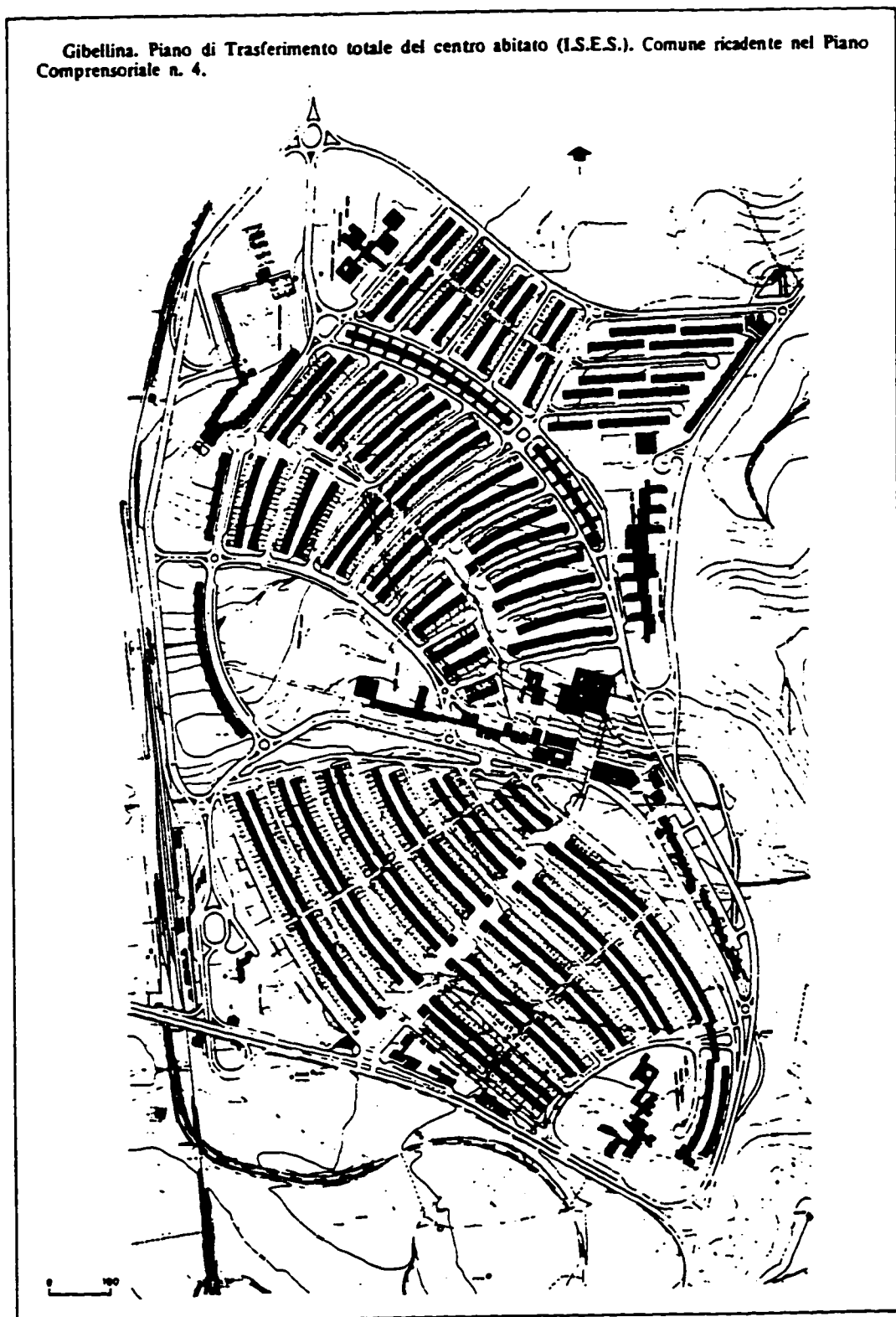


Figure 7 ISES Plan: New Town, Gibellina
(Renna et. al. 1979: 256)

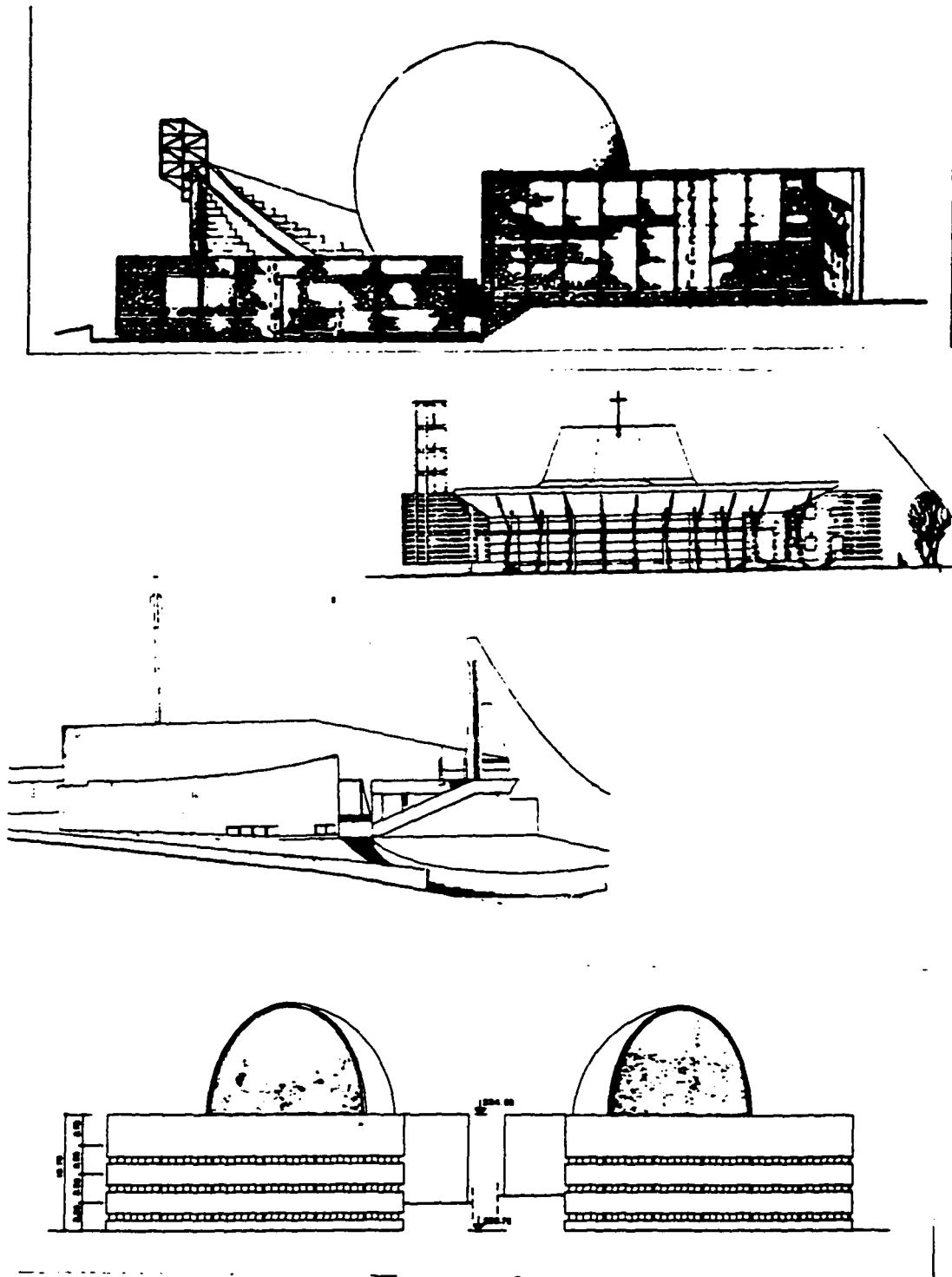


Figure 8 Churches Planned for New Towns
 (Renna et. al. 1979: 264, 346, 329, 363)

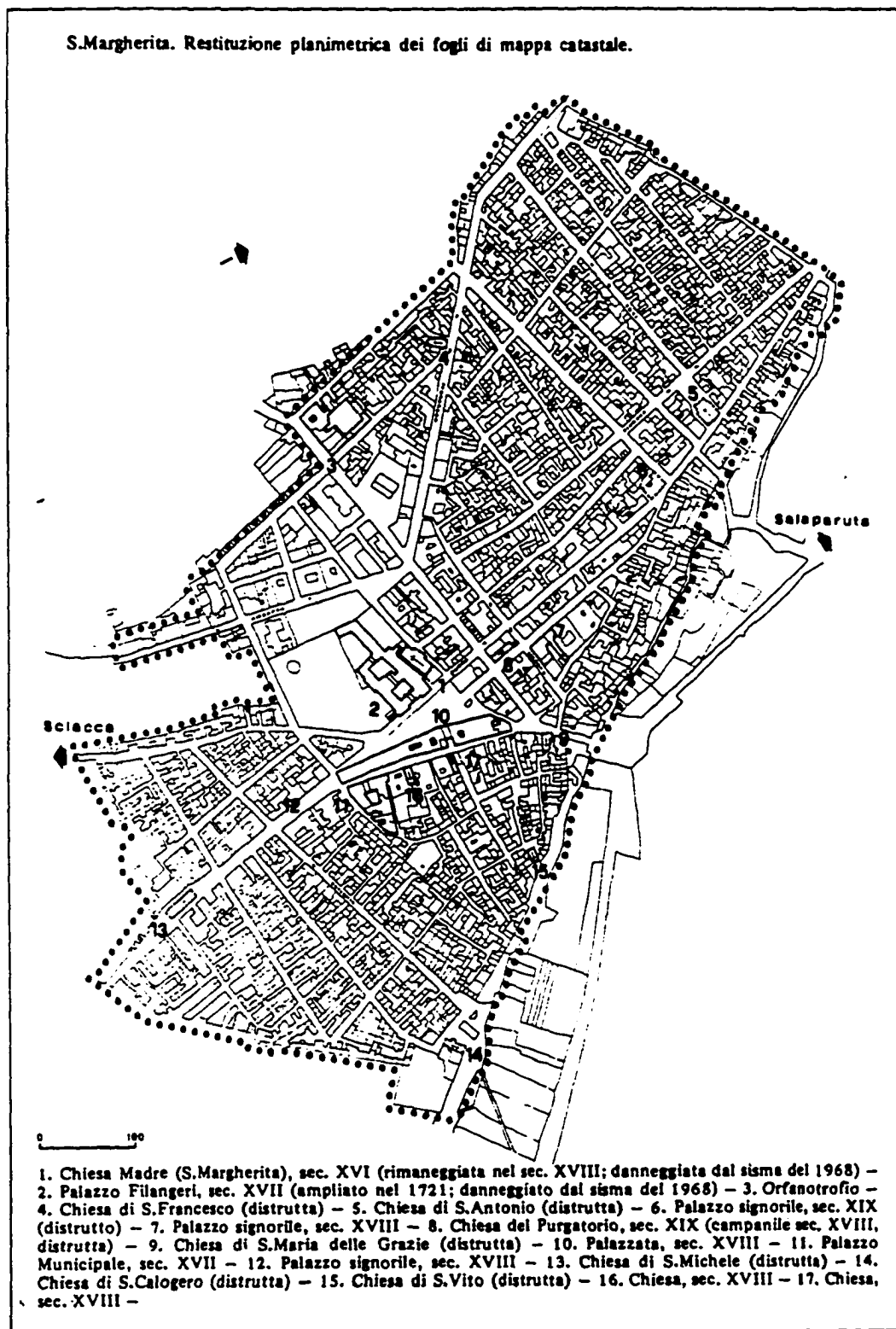


Figure 9 Map of Santa Margherita di Belice, Old Town
 (Renna et. al. 1979: 389)

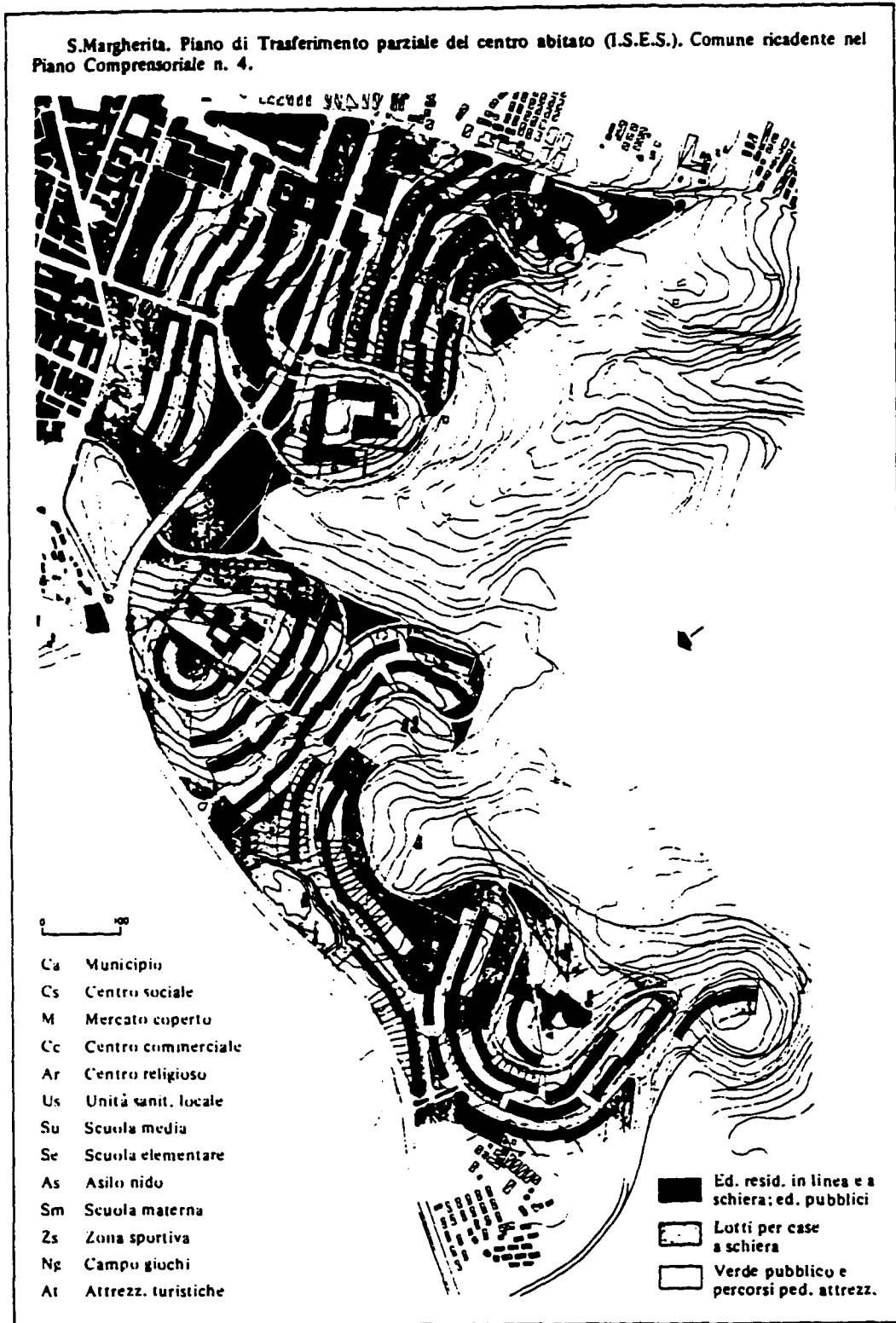


Figure 10 ISES Plan: New Town, Santa Margherita di Belice
(Renna et. al. 1979: 392)

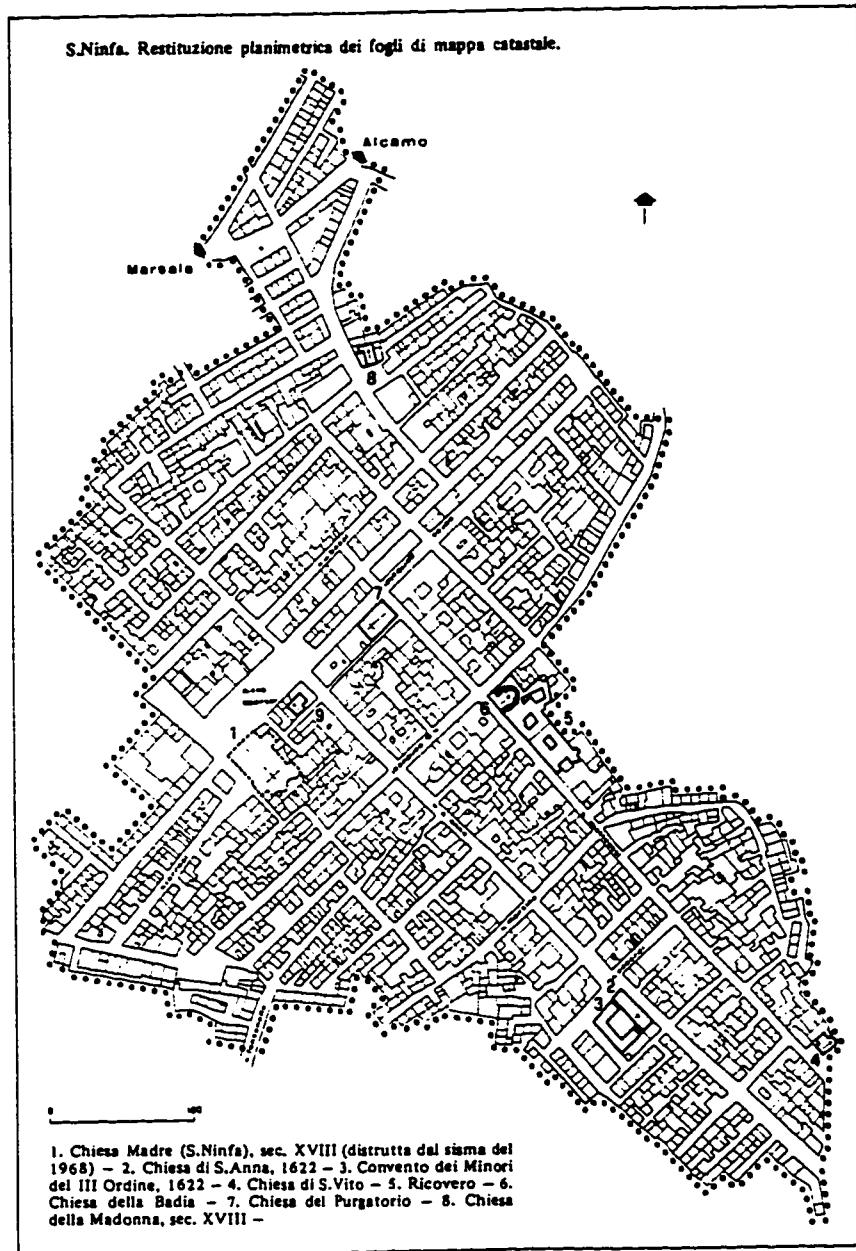


Figure 11 Map of Santa Ninfa, Old Town
(Renna et. al. 1979: 407)

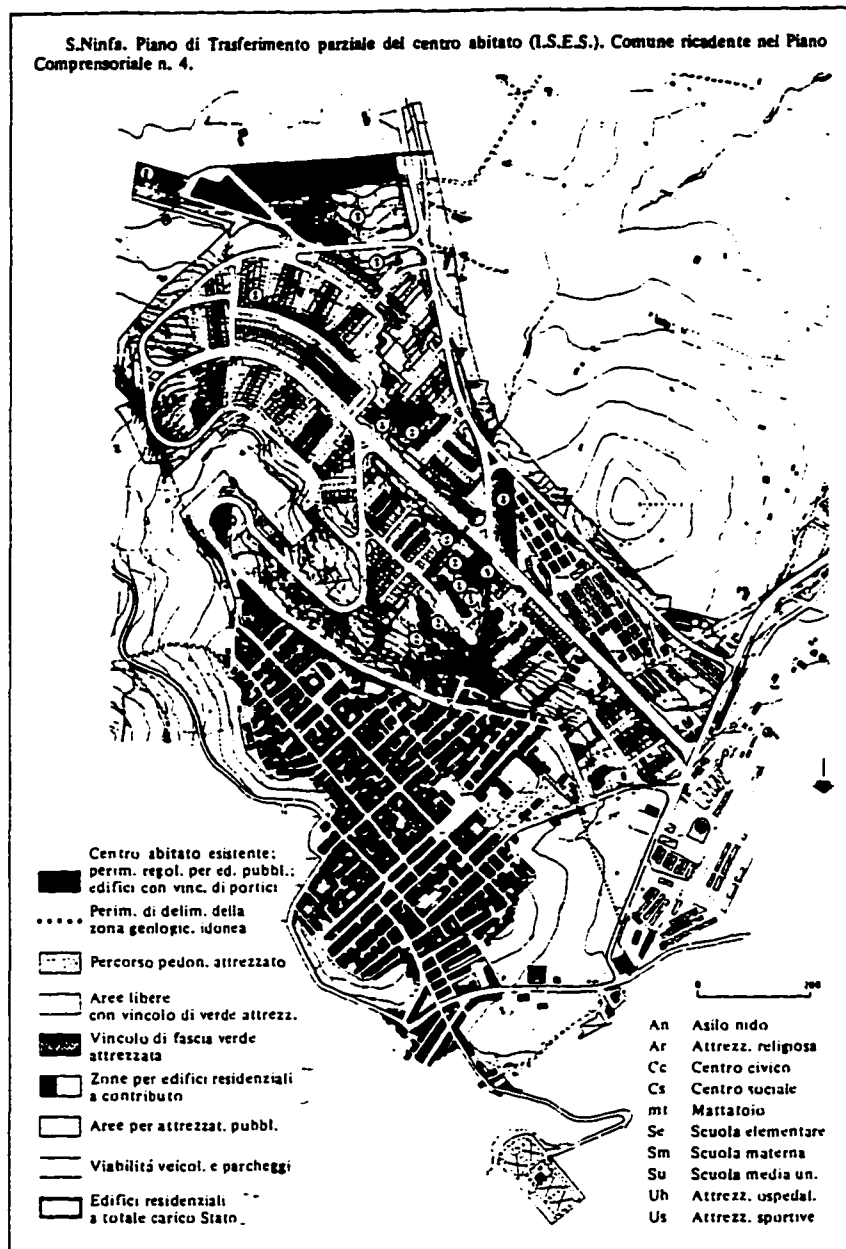


Figure 12 ISES Plan: Old Town and New Town, Santa Ninfa
(Renna et. al. 1979: 410)

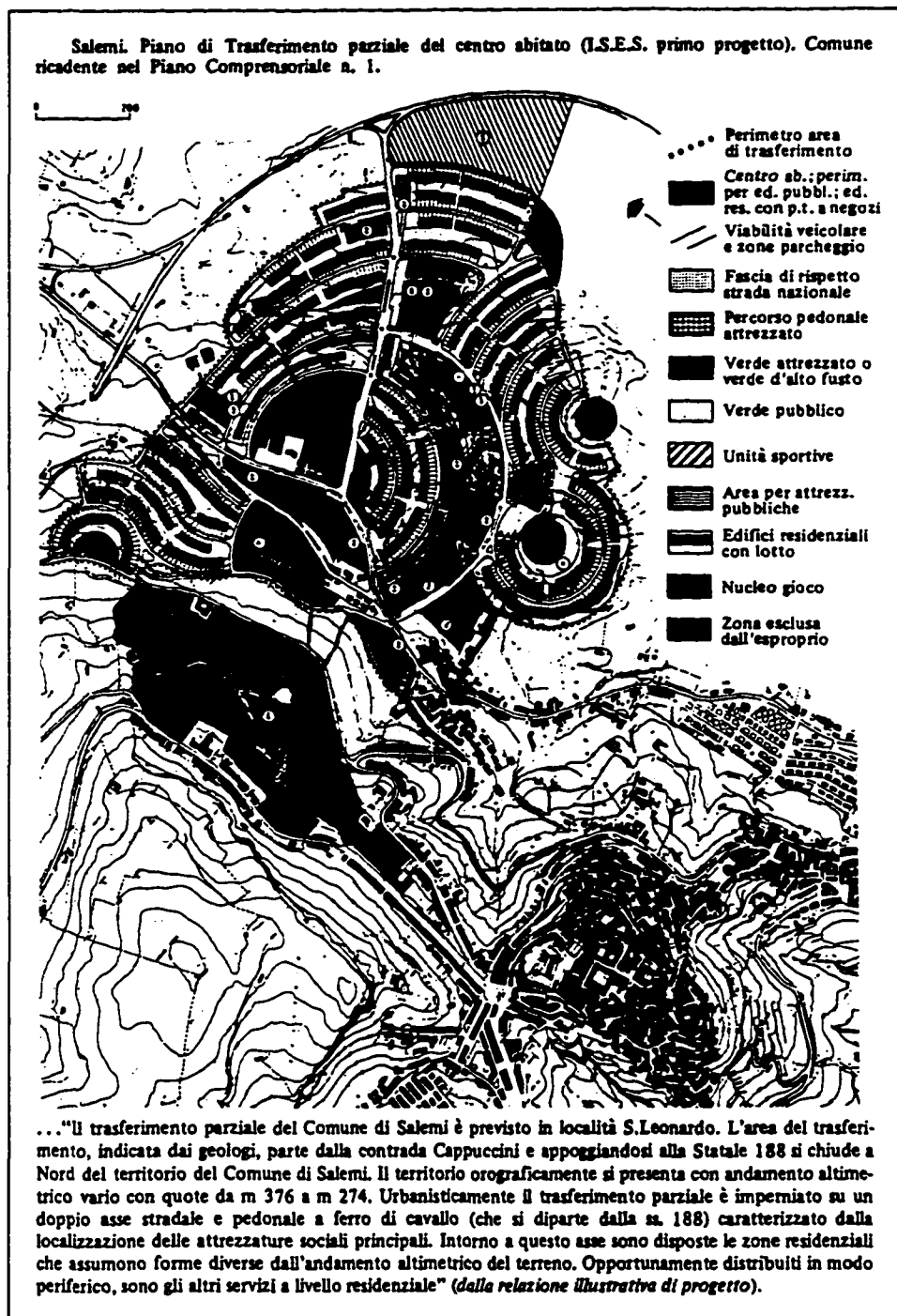


Figure 13 ISES Plan: New Zone and Old Center, Salemi (Renna et. al. 1979: 357)

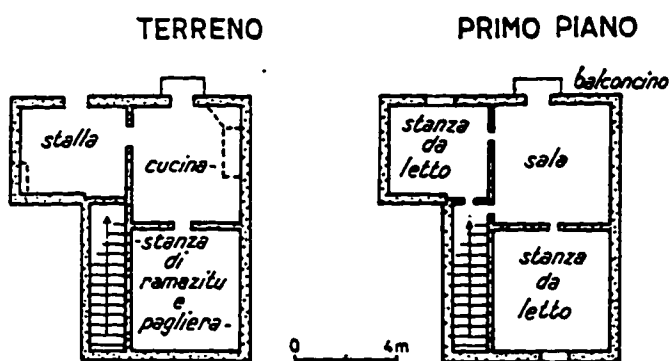
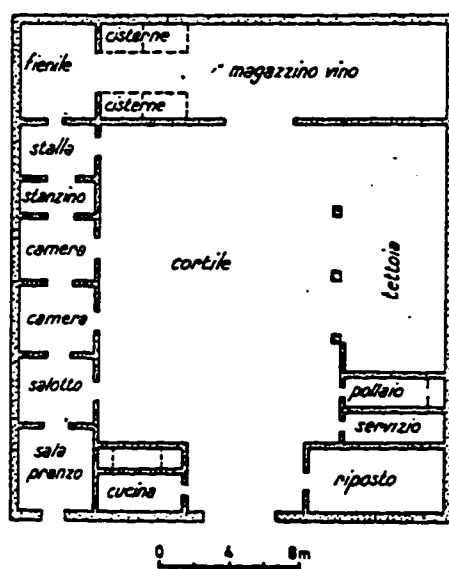
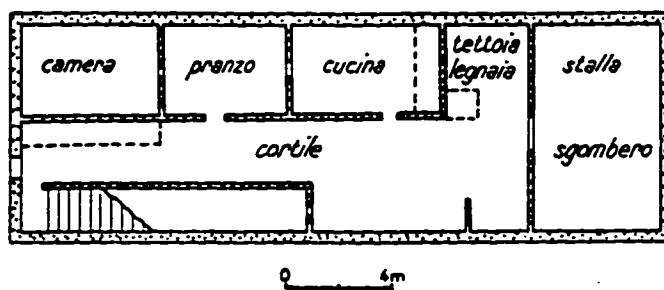


Figure 15 Layouts of Three **Burgisi** Houses
(Valussi 1968: 44, 47)

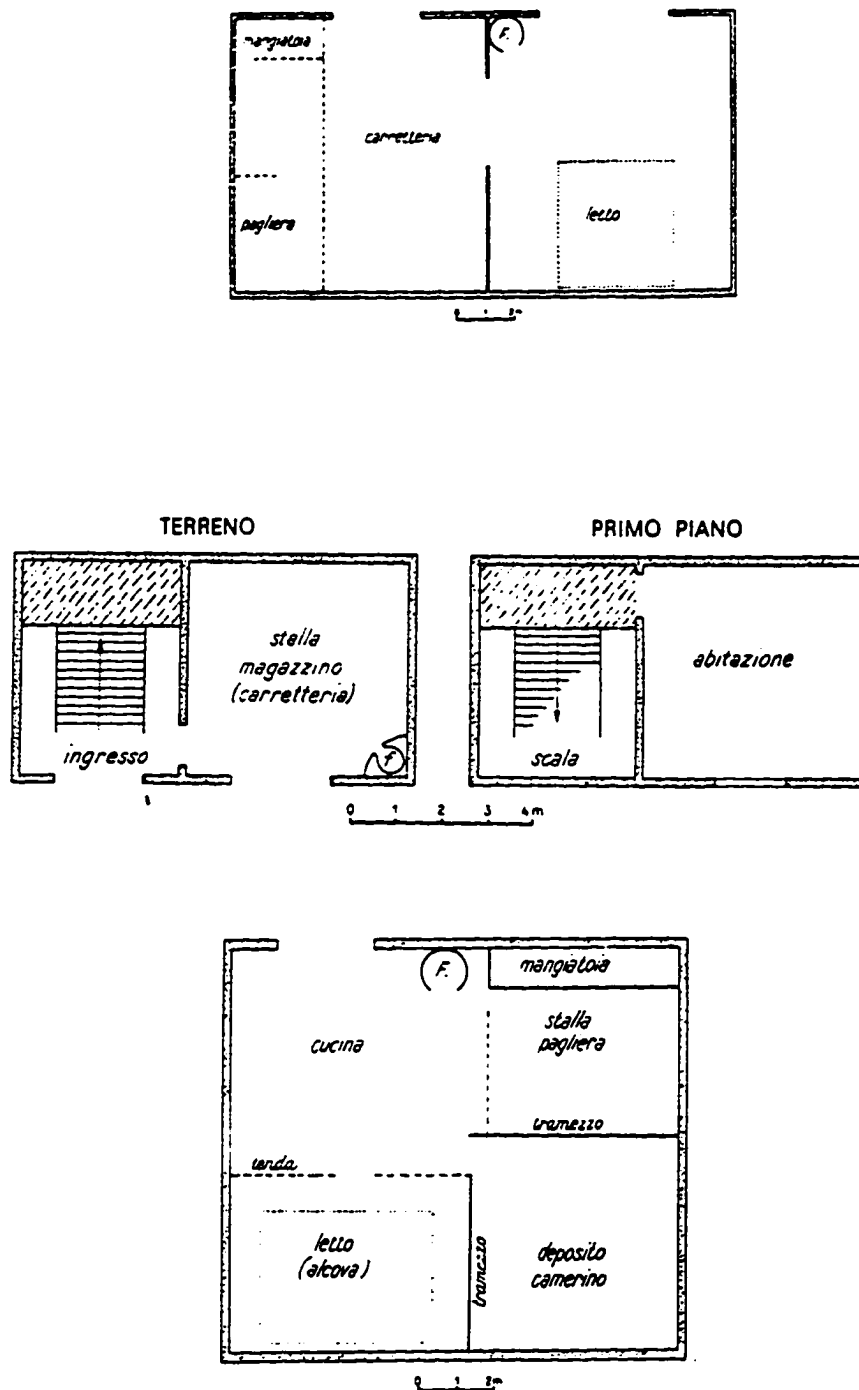


Figure 16 Layouts of Three Landless Peasant Houses
(Valussi 1968: 28, 31, 32)

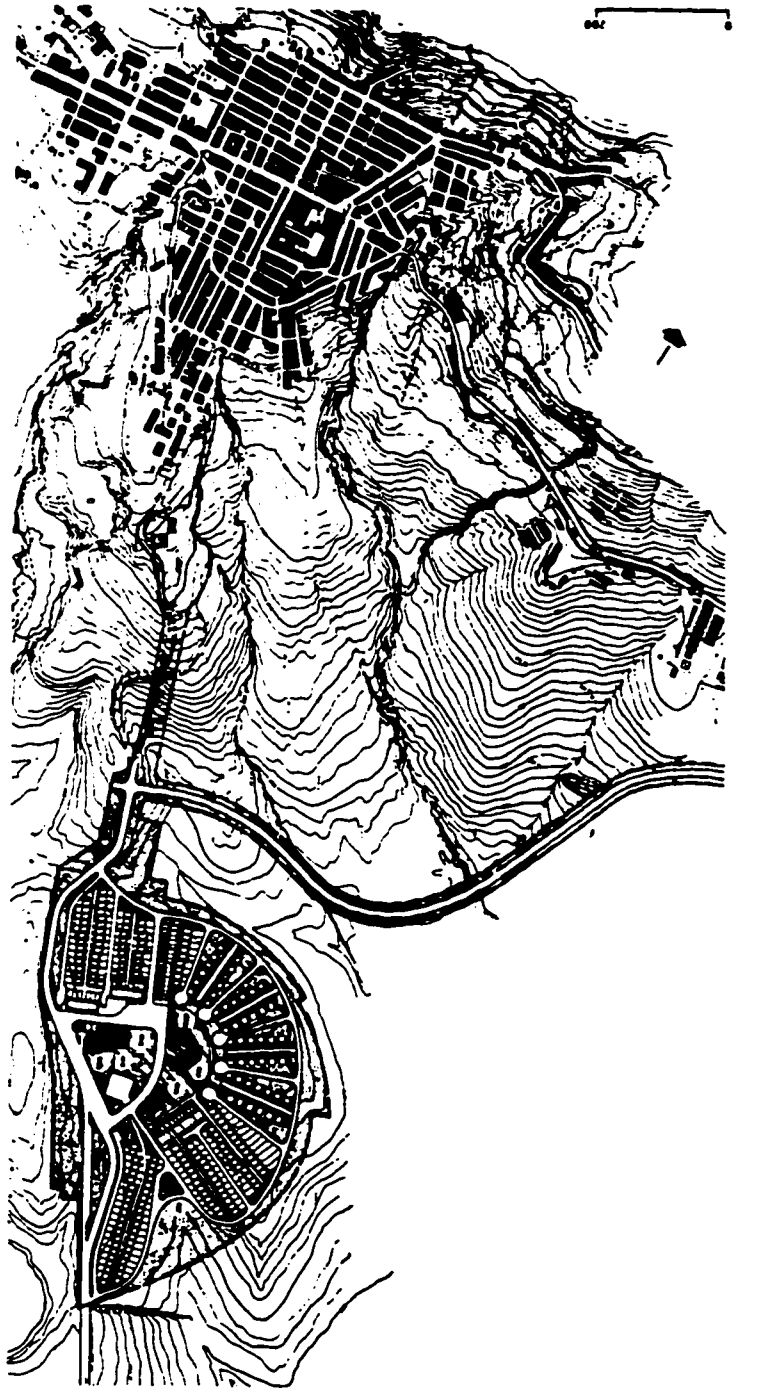


Figure 17 ISES Plan: Old Town and New Town, Camporeale
(Renna et. al. 1979: 228)

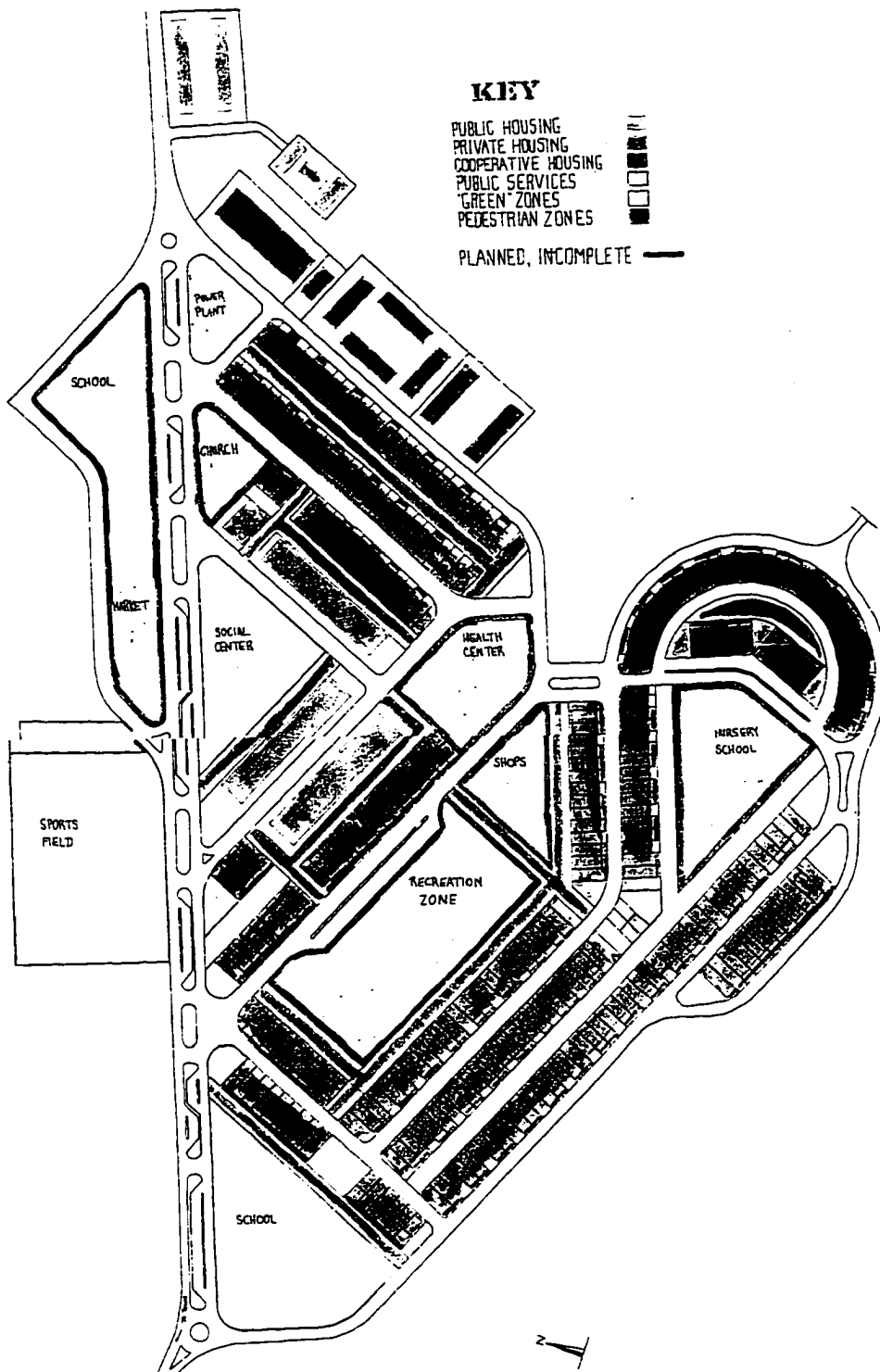


Figure 18 Housing Types, Sasi, Calatafimi

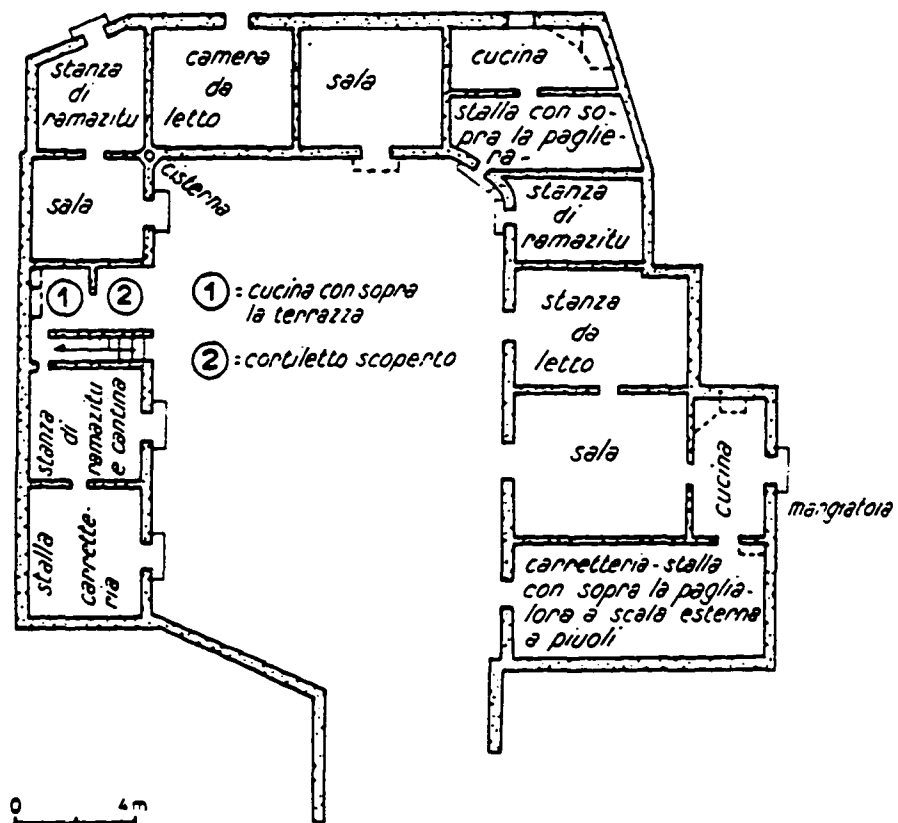


Figure 19 Layout for Shared Cortile for Agriculturalists
(Valussi 1968: 39)

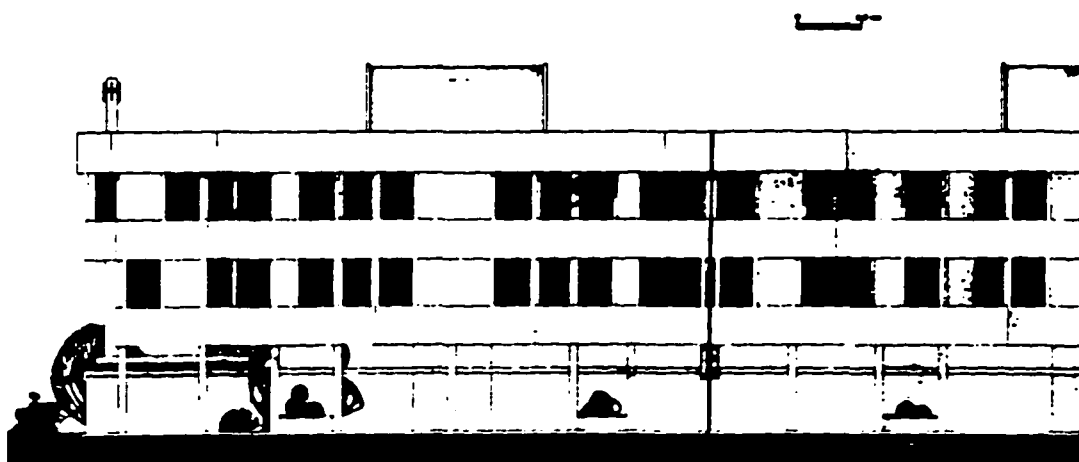
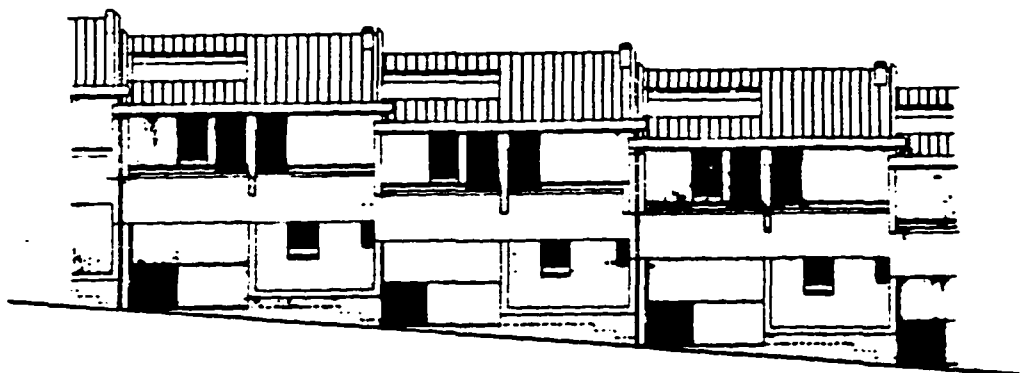


Figure 20 Two ISES Housing Types for New Towns
(Renna et. al. 1979: 446, 444)

GLOSSARY OF ITALIAN TERMS

| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| America ca semmu: (America qua siamo) | This is America |
| angolo cottura | cooking angle, small kitchen |
| anima | soul |
| arrangiarsi | to arrange oneself, to get by |
| a schiera | adjoined housing |
| assistenzialismo | welfare dependency |
| atti di nascita | birth records |
| autostrada | superhighway |
| baglio | rural farm building complex |
| baraccopoli | barrackstown |
| benessere | well-being |
| il Bronx | the Bronx |
| burgisi | land-owning peasants |
| in campagna | in the countryside |
| cantina | winery |
| case coloniche | rural houses |
| case d'oro | houses of gold |
| case popolari | public housing |
| civilta | civility, urbane behavior |
| contributo | contribution, state subsidy |
| corso | main street, boulevard |
| cortile | courtyard |
| famiglie numerosi | large family, many children |
| foglie di familie | family records |
| gabelloto | rural estate manager |
| imbrogliapopolo | troublemakers |
| iurnateri (giornaliero) | day laborer |
| macchia d'olio | drop of oil; slow, even growth |
| mangiano le miglie | they're eating up money |
| mezzadria | sharecropping |
| le mille | the thousand |
| la miseria | misery, impoverishment |
| mostra costruita | constructed monster |
| palazzo | mansion, large house |
| piazza (e) | town square(s) |
| podestà | Fascist official |
| popolino | the little people |
| i ruderi | the ruins |
| saltata in aria | blown up, exploded |
| scheda bianca | blank ballot |
| scirocco | hot winds from Africa |
| scuola media | middle school |
| sventramento, cauto e dolce | gutting, cautious and sweet |
| i terremotati | the earthquaked |
| tipizzazione | standardization |
| villeggiatura | vacation, holidays |

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