

CSAC MONOGRAPHS 3



*The Political and Social Context  
of Industrialisation:  
The Case of Manfredonia*

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Centre For Social Anthropology and Computing

**UNIVERSITY OF KENT**  
AT CANTERBURY ■■■■

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## Foreword

These two studies published here as Volumes 2 and 3 of the CSAC Monograph Series, derive from fieldwork carried out in the late sixties and early seventies: an earlier version of the first, 'Land Politics and Power in a southern Italian Community', was originally submitted as a doctoral thesis in the University of London; the second, 'The Political and Social Context of Industrialisation - the case of Manfredonia', is based on a research report written for ISVET (*Istituto per gli studi sullo sviluppo economico e il progresso tecnico*) in 1974. Although both were independently researched, there is close continuity of themes and argument between them. Both seek to evaluate post-war southern Italian development against the background of a troubled history of acute social change and rural turbulence traced back to the fall of the *ancien régime*; both examine the way in which major changes in agricultural practice, land use and tenurial systems transformed patterns of stratification and the distribution of power in local communities; both are concerned with continuities and disjunctions in political forms and the role of patronage in impeding social and economic change. Somewhat fortuitously, they are neatly paired.

A major problem in assessing the consequences of post-war development policies, is how to disentangle the effects of specific, state-sponsored, development programmes from far less visible and dramatic changes brought about by migrant remittances, transfer payments, Common Market subsidies and a whole range of near universal social and welfare provisions gradually established throughout Italy since 1946. With their clear-cut objectives and statements of intent, land reform programmes and development pole policy are much more amenable to straightforward cost-benefit analysis, and it is only too easy to fall into the trap of believing that they are the font of all change, and that the systematic transformation of the South only begins with the advent of the large scale development programmes of the post-war years. In this context my two case studies provide an instructive contrast. As a relatively isolated hill-top village of the interior, Pertosa has been virtually excluded from the 'benefits' of direct intervention programmes; on the other hand, with two land reform and land improvement schemes and an important industrial complex, Manfredonia has been a major 'beneficiary'. Nevertheless, on completion of fieldwork in 1971, I was left with the overwhelming impression that in terms of those things which

mattered most to their respective inhabitants - general standards of living, housing, job prospects, access to welfare, medical and educational services, there was little to choose between the two. Manfredonia undoubtedly enjoyed a much larger and expanding resource base, but the potential advantages accruing from land reform and industrialisation were being rapidly eroded by an influx of migrants who swamped the job market and put increasing, often intolerable, pressures on local services. In these circumstances, my evaluation of Manfredonia's economic prospects was inevitably somewhat dismal.

Without further fieldwork it is impossible to offer a detailed assessment of social and economic changes in these two communities after 1975. Brief visits made to both in 1990 (whilst engaged in subsequent research in Ascoli Satriano, one of the 'methane' communes of the south-west Tavoliere) would not incline me to revise my original, pessimistic, judgment. Although both have shared in a general improvement in prosperity and living standards common to much of the South throughout the eighties, in different ways both face an uncertain future. Despite a modest increase in tourists and tourist facilities, Pertosa's economy and population (now below 3,000) have slowly declined over the last fifteen years, and the well-being of its demographically skewed population is increasingly dependent on transfer payments, migrant remittances and the windfall profits of earthquake relief. Manfredonia has fared little better, and many of the criticisms of the opponents of the industrial project in 1969 have been proved fully justified. Physically hemmed in by the concrete wilderness of its industrial infrastructure and subject to periodic pollution from industrial effluent, it has been largely excluded from the tourist expansion of the Gargano. A steadily increasing population, which has now made it the second largest town in the province, has continued to exert pressure on jobs and services. A modest expansion of the Macchia industrial complex in the late seventies was partially offset by the collapse of the *Ajinomoto-Insud* plant. A decade later the ENI industrial complex itself was under threat of closure. Perhaps the most telling comment came from a local school teacher (who had himself worked for many years in Manfredonia) during the 1990 summer festival in Ascoli Satriano. 'At the end of the methane campaign', he said, 'we were bitter in Ascoli when we found that the only reward for our efforts was the consolation prize of two tiny industrial plants. Perhaps we were wrong. In retrospect, even token industrialisation is better than the industrial involution which has been Manfredonia's lot.'

Although some of the ideas, themes and citations in these studies are now somewhat dated, overall, perhaps, they do not greatly affect the balance and direction of argument in what are essentially descriptive analyses.

Nevertheless, in the light of more recent research, three themes at least require further brief comment. The first concerns the historical background to these studies.

Like many other ethnographers of southern Italy and Sicily in this period (Bell, Blok, Davis, Douglass, Jane and Peter Schneider, White)<sup>1</sup>, I sought to offer more than mere sketch-map history, and argued that many contemporary institutions, rituals and cultural values could only be understood by setting them in the context of series of dramatic changes which had occurred in the nineteenth century, and particularly processes of state formation and the introduction of capitalism into the countryside which followed the feudal and ecclesiastical land settlements of the early nineteenth century. This perspective, if not wrong in itself, is certainly too simple. Recent research by social and economic historians and, above all, by historical demographers suggests that it grossly over-privileges the nineteenth century, and offers a far too unilinear and foreshortened view of Italian history<sup>2</sup>. It is now clear that by the end of the eighteenth century Manfredonia (and probably Pertosa, too) was a far more 'open' society than I had envisaged and that, as a result of the supervisory role of the *Regia Dogana*, Tavoliere towns in general had had an intense and intricate relationship with the state throughout the early modern period. Similarly, many of the changes classically associated with the land settlements of the nineteenth century are now shown to have been foreshadowed in previous centuries.

A second point of uncertainty is the cultural obstacles to change thesis which was an important theme in the Manfredonia study. This line of enquiry was suggested by ENI itself who believed that a failure in the host community to understand the logic of industrial development and technological innovation was a serious impediment to change. From the outset I was cautiously sceptical of the value of this approach if only because, already by the late sixties, both the cultural obstacles thesis and related sociological arguments about convergence and the logic of industrialism had been substantially discredited. In the event I found little supporting evidence for either argument. Somewhat surprisingly this style of argument (albeit in an inverted form) was resuscitated by Italian sociologists in the late seventies with the claim that key factors in the social structure and value system of central Italian society - extended families, *mezzadria*, patterns of rural urban cooperation, had greatly facilitated the development of small industrial enterprise and was largely responsible for the economic expansion of the *Terza Italia*<sup>3</sup>. Although some of these elements (for example, three generational family cooperation amongst fishermen) can be discovered in some sub-sections of Manfredonia's population, their effect, if any, was very slight, neither impeding nor stimulating industrial growth or a positive

evaluation of the opportunities offered by the introduction into the community of new industrial technologies.

A third and final set of comments is required concerning the role of patronage in local politics and in processes of development. A major theme in both studies was that, despite changes in form and content, throughout the period under review, patronage had continued to shape the structure of political competition and party affiliation, that it was an important determinant of voting behavior and that, overall, it had tended to impede economic and social development. Despite subsequent anthropological discussion about the 'myth' of patronage and the well rehearsed argument that patronage is little more than a landowner ideology masking class exploitation,<sup>4</sup> I am not inclined to change my original view substantially. Especially in the Manfredonia study, I sought to specify some of the limits to patronage, and suggested that with increasing prosperity it was losing some of its force. I also sought to explain why, earlier in this century, Manfredonia, unlike other towns in the south Tavoliere,<sup>5</sup> had been relatively impervious to class-based politics. In both studies I tried to show the differential impact of patronage in local as opposed to regional and national elections. At worst, and especially in my account of electoral behaviour in Pertosa, I perhaps exaggerated the significance of patronage by playing down other sources of political commitment and, also, political apathy.

Although I do not wish to imply patronage is the only or even the dominant force in southern Italian politics, it is certainly not insignificant. Even the most cursory examination of local election results in Pertosa and Manfredonia after 1975 shows that Salvemini's theory of alternating factions still holds broadly true, and that political competitions and outcomes are still predominantly shaped by patronage interest. Interestingly, the struggle for mastery of patronage resources which followed the introduction of large-scale earthquake relief programmes in Pertosa and the communes of the Sub-Appennino Dauno in the eighties was not very different from the political turmoil occasioned by land reform and industrial development schemes a generation earlier. Overall, patronage remains the single most important source of blockage in the Italian political system.

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## Chapter 1

### The Problem and its Setting

#### General aims and methods

This study is about the political context and social effects of industrialisation in South Italy. Based on detailed fieldwork carried out in 1969 and 1970 in Manfredonia, a medium-sized town, on the north-east coast of Puglia, it has a number of distinct aims. At the most general level, it provides a descriptive analysis of the social consequences of setting up a petrochemical plant on the outskirts of the town. More specifically, it attempts to analyse both the ways in which different sectors of the local community perceived, assessed and tried to influence the industrial decision making process, and the relationships which developed over time between town and incoming industry.

My choice of Manfredonia as a centre of research was dictated by practical rather than theoretical considerations. Chief amongst these was the fact that I was assured beforehand of the co-operation of ENI, the company responsible for establishing the factory in the town, which, indeed, indirectly, partly sponsored the research.<sup>1</sup> ENI's decision to build a complex of factories on the north coast of Puglia had first been announced at the end of 1966, and by the time I arrived in Manfredonia in the autumn of 1969 their construction was well under way. Originally I had intended to remain in the field until the plant went into production and to interview the first batch of local employees and their families. Because of delays in the building programme, this proved impossible, the first factory only becoming operative a few months after my research assistant left Manfredonia in 1971.

Methodologically, this study presented a number of problems. From a strictly anthropological point of view Manfredonia was both too large and too amorphous to be easily susceptible to traditional fieldwork techniques, and the problem of scale was made worse since the research could not be limited to Manfredonia alone. The classical anthropological method of participant observation works best in small scale, face-to-face societies with relatively fixed and static populations, little stratification, and a community of shared values and beliefs. In such societies, the anthropologist becomes

personally acquainted with a high proportion of the population and can quite reasonably assume that the behaviour of the people he knows is fairly typical of those he does not. Unfortunately, although there are small tight-knit communities within Manfredonia, for example amongst landowning and professional classes, and in some of the smaller occupational groups such as fishermen, the town as a whole is not a face-to-face community in the proper sense of the term. There are, in fact, significant cultural differences both between the social classes and between the original population and the large immigrant communities which have grown up since the war. Indeed, Manfredonians themselves are far more conscious of the things which divide them than the customs, values and assumptions which they hold in common.

In theory, many of these difficulties, particularly those of scale, could have been overcome by the use of formal sociological techniques; in practice, in societies such as Manfredonia, they present a range of problems. The most intractable is the fact that formal interviews and questionnaires are largely incompatible with traditional notions about the value and functions of knowledge, and are consequently met with suspicion and diffidence.

In Manfredonia, diffidence, in the sense of withholding, concealing or distorting information, was never absolute - on many subjects, for example, on the theme of their own hospitality or in talking about the sexual exploits of emigrants, people could be exasperatingly loquacious, but in some areas of social life it was sufficiently strong to make the collection of data a difficult and protracted task. Politics provides a good example. With good reason, many Manfredonians believed that access to certain types of information was an important dimension of political power. Detailed knowledge about the availability of new economic and political resources might properly be used to further family interests or even exchanged for reciprocal favours, but to divulge it to comparative strangers administering formal interviews and questionnaires would be to dissipate a potentially valuable asset. A second area of diffidence was in the field of family affairs. In Manfredonia, as in all traditional agrarian societies, gossip management is an important mechanism of social control regulating the relative prestige and rank order of individual families who are consequently anxious to control and restrict the type and amount of information about themselves which they present to others. Furthermore, since information is regarded as a valuable resource, its flow is governed by the rules of gift exchange.<sup>2</sup> Thus, its quality and the relative freedom with which it passes varies strictly with social distance, declining in both respects as one moves out from the tight circle of kin and regular exchange partners to the more distant universe of strangers and potential enemies.

A good example of the difficulties of using formal interviews and questionnaires in societies in which information is seen as an exchange commodity arose during my fieldwork in Manfredonia. At the end of my stay there I planned to employ an outside professional agency to administer a questionnaire which was designed, among other things, to test and compare attitudes to and knowledge about industrialisation in various sectors of the population. After an initial pilot survey, however, it became clear that not only were refusal and "avoidance"<sup>3</sup> rates likely to be unduly high, but also that differences in degrees of information and attitudes to industrialisation varied not as I would have expected according to the different social characteristics of the people interviewed, but according to their relationship with the interviewers. Indeed, in the event, I was obliged both to reduce the size of the survey population, and, for the most part, to abandon sociological sampling techniques, relying instead on a series of local assistants who interviewed a stratified sample of their own personal networks.

In view of these various difficulties the methods adopted in this study were inevitably a compromise - a mixture of anthropological and sociological techniques, with the emphasis on the former. The research was carried out in four stages. Initially, relying on traditional anthropological techniques, I was primarily concerned with Manfredonia itself, living unobtrusively within the town in an effort to assimilate the values and beliefs of its inhabitants, and to understand the main structural characteristics of their community. I then conducted a series of informal and semi-formal interviews amongst local politicians and trade unionists and with leaders of relevant interest groups, bureaucrats and representatives of the ENI/ANIC management at the local, regional and national levels. The third stage of the research in which I had the collaboration of a small number of local part-time helpers and a full-time British research assistant, consisted in examining in detail those institutions and occupational categories which seemed most likely to be affected by the establishment of a large industrial complex. And, at the same time, I also collected information about the economic and political structures of several nearby communes. Finally, I trained a group of local interviewers to administer a detailed questionnaire, largely concerned with various aspects of industrialisation, to some 220 household heads in Manfredonia.

Taken separately, each of these approaches had obvious and fairly severe limitations; together, they were designed to complement one another, and, in part at least, to cancel out the defects of any one particular method. Whilst I cannot pretend that my knowledge of Manfredonia is of the same order as that of the anthropologist who studies a community of two or three hundred souls, I was rarely compelled to rely solely on formal methods of

data collection. When I did so, my intention was not so much to gather fresh information as to consolidate and to quantify impressions and judgements I had formed whilst living in the community.

### **The Planning Background**

Although it is clearly beyond the scope of this study to offer a detailed account of the history of Italian development policy in the South, a thumbnail sketch of some of its main aspects is necessary in order to understand and to assess the impact and the implications of the Manfredonia project.<sup>4</sup>

At the risk of over-simplification, the history of economic intervention in the Mezzogiorno can be divided into four main phases. The first, the period between Italian unification and 1950, was characterised by a series of piecemeal and, on the whole, ineffective reforms; the second, spanning the years 1950-57, brought the introduction of large-scale economic intervention in agriculture and infrastructural improvements; the third, from 1957-1964, the first systematic attempt to introduce industry into the South; the fourth, the years between 1964 and the mid-seventies was a period of consolidation in which development policy in the South has been brought more and more into the framework of national economic planning.

In the years immediately following Italian unification in 1861, the economic disparity between North and South was attributed to political rather than economic or social causes. For Italy's new political elite, the South's difficulties stemmed from Bourbon misrule and malpractices and the solution to its problems lay in a mixture of good government and the creation of an economic infrastructure which would enable southerners to help themselves. Thus, whilst continuing a policy of land redistribution through the sale of ecclesiastical and public holdings which had been begun under their Bourbon predecessors, they embarked on an extensive and ambitious programme of public works, concentrating particularly on building and improving roads, bridges, waterworks and railways. These policies, however, failed to satisfy most southerners and were bitterly attacked by the *meridionalisti*, the most articulate pressure group in the South, who argued that the southern provinces had received far less in development aid than they had paid in taxes, and that the economic gap between North and South was steadily widening. The first of these arguments is almost certainly false but nevertheless was to become part of the standardised mythology of the South; the second is at least debatable. Although there is little reason to suggest that economic disparity between North and South was increasing before 1890, after that date, largely as a result of the rapid industrial expansion of the North, the gap between the two grew progressively larger.

After 1900, alarmed by peasant unrest, and fully aware of the extent to which the South was slipping behind, the government reluctantly agreed to special legislation. Between 1904 and 1911, a series of regional laws were passed which were designed to encourage agricultural improvements and to offer fiscal concessions to some of the poorer areas in the South, and these policies were to some extent consolidated and extended in the inter-war period. Nevertheless, taken overall, such measures were far too small in scale and far too fragmentary to improve the economy of the South as a whole. Conditions grew steadily worse, and in the twenty year period between 1928 and 1948, average real incomes fell by about 25%.<sup>5</sup> Indeed by the end of the Second World War, the Italian South had come to be recognised as a classic example of the economic ill effects resulting from the encapsulation of a backward region within a much more dynamic and advanced national economy.

The second phase in Italian development policy spanned the years 1950-1957 and was characterised by a much more co-ordinated attitude to planning. The state's diagnosis of the problems of the South (infrastructural weaknesses and the poverty of agriculture) remained essentially unchanged, but the means whereby it sought to remedy them were far more systematic and widespread than anything that had gone before. 1950 saw the introduction of two sets of measures designed to aid the South. The first was the creation of the *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* (the Fund for the South), an executive body under the control of an interministerial committee of ministers for the South, which was introduced to draw up and actuate a programme of extraordinary works to be carried out over a ten year period,<sup>6</sup> and was allocated an initial budget of 1000 milliard lire for this purpose. The second was the establishment of a series of regional land reform boards empowered to expropriate large estates which were to be improved, divided and allocated to peasants.

The establishment of the *Cassa* marked a turning point in national economic planning. In the first place it was a tacit recognition that piecemeal measures had failed, and that future success depended on long-term economic planning. Secondly, for the first time, intersectorial intervention was envisaged. By placing the *Cassa* under the jurisdiction of an interministerial committee, in which all ministries with an interest in the South were represented, it was hoped that it would prove possible to formulate and introduce co-ordinated policies even when these cut across the spheres of interest of traditional bureaucratic departments. Thirdly, it is important to note that the *Cassa's* funds were earmarked for extraordinary expenditures, and as such were intended to supplement and not to act as substitutes for the ordinary investments of traditional ministries.

In the period 1950-57 investment in agriculture absorbed the bulk of development funds made available to the South. By the end of 1959 the various regional land reform agencies had expropriated 419,000 hectares on the southern mainland, and had spent some 200 milliard lire on the improvement of land and on the provision of farmhouses, technical services and infrastructure. Similarly, until 1957 almost 80% of the *Cassa's* budget was in the agricultural sector. But despite this concentration of investment, the success of state intervention in agriculture was limited. Undoubtedly the land reform programme brought many peripheral benefits to the South: initially, it provided much needed jobs for unemployed and impoverished peasant families, and the policy of building country roads and services benefitted the agricultural community as a whole. In its main aim, however, of creating a class of independent smallholders with incomes comparable with those of industrial workers, its success was restricted to a few highly exceptional areas. Indeed its overall failure was amply demonstrated by the fact that in the early sixties, when emigration to the Common Market countries became practicable, many people abandoned their holdings in favour of industrial jobs abroad.

After 1957, and in partial recognition of the incipient failure of their agricultural policies, national planners turned more and more towards industrialisation as a remedy for the problems of the South, and the third phase of development policy, covering the period between 1957 and 1964, is characterised by a series of measures designed to promote industrial growth. The legislative framework for this change of policy was largely created by Law 634. Law 634 had three main aspects. First it provided financial and fiscal incentives for firms prepared to move to the South. Secondly, it consolidated and reinforced existing legislation which enjoined state controlled industries to make a high proportion of new investments in the Mezzogiorno. Thirdly, it initiated a policy, which was to have important implications in the future, of directing and concentrating investment into a limited number of geographically restricted development areas.

One of the basic aims of this legislation was to encourage the growth of small firms and artisan enterprises. For the first time the *Cassa del Mezzogiorno* was empowered to make capital grants to artisans in any part of the South, and to small and medium industrial concerns setting up plants in towns with less than 75,000 inhabitants, and these subsidies were extended and increased by a supplementary law in 1959. At the same time, the state realised that more positive stimulation was needed if sustained industrial growth was to be achieved. Since 1950, legislation had existed which recognised the potential propulsive role of state controlled industries, and which had instructed them to place at least 60% of the new investments in the South. The effects of this measure, however, were severely limited since in



the years immediately following the Second World War the investment policies of state industries were primarily directed towards reconstruction and the modernisation and replacement of existing plants, for the most part situated in the North. After 1957, however, state holding companies, and particularly IRI<sup>7</sup> and ENI moved into a phase of expansion, and most of their major investments were located in the South. Between 1957 and 1964 these southern investments amounted to 1,161 milliard lire, and a further 800 milliards was added in the years 1965-68. In the same period the percentage of their total investment in the South rose from one-fifth to almost one-half.

A particularly interesting feature of Italian policy after 1957 was the decision to concentrate investment on a limited number of growth centres. Law 634 authorised the establishment of local consortia (whose members were normally drawn from local chambers of commerce and from interested local authorities) which were empowered to draw up detailed development plans for their areas and to select suitable sites (*agglomerati*) for the location of industry. After drawing up their plans (a task in which they were usually helped by paid consultants) the consortia were to submit them to the Council of Ministers where they would be discussed, and, if suitable, finally approved by an interministerial committee. Two sorts of growth centres were envisaged: areas of industrial development and nuclei of industrial development, the main difference between them being size of population.<sup>8</sup>

By the mid nineteen-sixties, the present range of provisions for the development of the South was virtually complete, and the most recent and fourth phase of development policy has been more concerned with strengthening and co-ordinating existing measures than with introducing new ones. Of particular importance, in this respect, was Law 717 of August 1965. Under this law the activities of the *Cassa del Mezzogiorno* were extended until 1980, and its budget was increased. At least one-third of its funds was to be spent on industrial development which henceforth was much more explicitly confined to growth centres. More important, Law 717 set out to improve coordination of policy in the South. The old Committee of Ministers was to be replaced by an Interministerial Committee for Southern Italy which was to work within the framework of CIPE (the Interministerial Committee for National Economic Planning). The main purpose of these changes was to try to ensure that economic intervention in the South was co-ordinated with national economic planning as a whole, and in particular with the first Italian Five Year Plan which was introduced in 1965.

At a general level, the National Plan had three main objectives: to improve social services, to achieve greater parity of income between the industrial and agricultural sectors of the economy and to eliminate

differences between developed and backward sectors of the economy. As far as the South was concerned, the Plan reconfirmed the existing emphasis on industrialisation as a major vehicle of social change, one of its specific goals being the creation of 1.5 million new jobs in the non-agricultural sector, at least 40% of which were to be located in the South.

Taken overall, southern Italy provides a fascinating test-case of development policy. Although it has never had a planned economy in the Soviet sense, in the course of little more than a century, Italian planners have tried out a wide range of development strategies: moving from piecemeal intervention in specific areas to concerted attempts to improve the economic infrastructure and agricultural organisation, to measures designed to promote industrial growth, and, finally, to a growing realisation that the difficulties of the South are closely bound up with wider national problems and policies. The extent to which these policies have succeeded is the source of considerable debate and any assessment of them depends very much on the yardstick against which they are measured.

If measured against their own stated objectives, or against the general aim of achieving equality of opportunity and conditions in the South, it is clear that these policies have failed. Thus, the land reform programme failed in its goal of providing self-sufficient farms producing family incomes comparable to those in the industrial sectors of the North. Similarly, it now seems unlikely that recent industrial policies will succeed in stimulating the growth of small and medium sized, labour intensive, enterprises on the scale envisaged, or that the aim of the Five Year Plan to create large numbers of jobs in the non-agricultural sector will be achieved. Furthermore, although the gap between North and South is nowadays not getting any wider, southern Italy is still significantly behind the North on almost all economically relevant variables.

The reasons for this apparent lack of success are both varied and complex. In the first place, despite a series of measures aimed at improving administrative efficiency and interministerial co-operation, the Italian government has never been able to ensure adequate bureaucratic coordination in either the planning or the execution of development policy. One of its major difficulties has been that traditional Italian bureaucracies are characterised by a high degree of centralisation in decision making and are also strongly jealous of their own departmental autonomy - qualities which have made it difficult to co-ordinate the activities of regular and extraordinary administrative agencies, and which have led to delays, waste and overlap in the execution of policy. Secondly considering the wide scope and the lofty ambitions of Italian development policy, it is extremely doubtful whether the

financial resources made available by the government have been adequate. In comparison with the sums spent on development in other Western European countries, the 4000 milliard lire expended by the *Cassa del Mezzogiorno* between 1950 and 1969 was a fairly modest total, and, indeed, despite the high flown commitments of the national plan, the percentage of national income being currently invested in the South is lower than in 1950. A third obstacle to success has been the extent to which political goals and objectives have been allowed to interfere with development policy. In Italy, as in most developing countries, both national and the local political elites have seen development as a major vehicle for the perpetuation of their own power and privileges. Consequently, economic development has been imbued with both safety-valve and patronage functions; being used not only to dampen down protest in the country as a whole, but also to build up followings of clients and support for local and national politicians.<sup>9</sup> And whilst it would be ingenuous to imagine that the political and economic dimensions of development are necessarily incompatible, it is undoubtedly true that the wide-scale infiltration and incorporation of political motives and objectives into the planning process has led to corruption, duplication and the dissipation of scarce development resources.

Nevertheless, whilst it is easy to criticise Italian planning policy both in general and specific terms, it is important not to overlook the very real progress which has taken place in the South since the end of the war. The reputation of Italian planners has inevitably and on the whole unfairly suffered because northern industrial Italy has provided the immediate and obvious standard against which to measure the success or failure of their policies in the South. If, however, one compares the progress of the South, not with the North, which after all has had one of the world's most dynamic growth rates for most of the early post-war period, but with other underdeveloped areas in Europe and the Mediterranean Basin, its overall performance looks very much more satisfactory. In terms of most of the standard indices of social and economic development: per capita income, the percentage of the work-force employed in the non-agricultural sector, the expansion of welfare and social service, decline in infant mortality and illiteracy rates and so on - there have been dramatic improvements in the South over the last twenty years. And although these improvements can in part be attributed to external factors such as the development of emigration and a free labour market within the Common Market, they are, in a real sense, a measure of the success of Italian development policy as a whole.

### Theoretical Perspectives

Despite the rapid growth of sociological interest in problems of development over the last two decades, there are still no more than a handful of detailed case studies of the the social implications of introducing factory technology into non-industrial societies.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, one of the most curious aspects of the current state of research in the sociology of development is the striking lack of fit between general theory and field research. For whilst industrialisation has provided macro-theorists with a major focus of interest, most empirical research has been concerned with technical and economic change in the agricultural sector: with land reform, resettlement and irrigation schemes and community development projects.

At the level of general theory, a dominant research strategy in studies of industrialisation proper has been to contrast, usually in terms of ideal types or pattern variables, the main structural characteristics of industrial and traditional societies.<sup>11</sup> Such comparison is based on the assumption that there is a close and necessary correspondence between the major institutions and values of modern society and the needs of industrial technology; an assumption which has led, almost inevitably, to the view that marked differences in the patterning of customs and beliefs in non-industrial societies are likely to constitute major obstacles to change. Thus, it has been argued that not only do traditional societies lack the structural prerequisites (entrepreneurial skills, mechanisms for capital accumulation and so on) of self-propelled economic growth, but that, even when technological change is introduced from outside, low labour commitment, a failure to understand the normative framework of modern industrial and administrative bureaucracies and a tenacious loyalty to traditional social institutions and values are powerful impediments to industrial development.

Whilst it is not difficult to find specific examples of cultural obstacles to change, abstract behaviourist models of social action at this level of generality can be both misleading and distorting. On the one hand, they exaggerate the societal needs of industrial technology; on the other, they discount the flexibility and manipulability of the institutional arrangements and values systems of traditional societies. The industrial performance of post-war Japan is a striking illustration of the ability of factory technology to adapt itself and to flourish within a non-Western cultural milieu.<sup>12</sup> And although the evidence from fieldwork is too scanty to be conclusive, what evidence there is suggests that cultural obstacles to industrialisation are, at most, temporary and of relatively minor significance.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the view that a persistent commitment to a traditional social order constitutes a major

obstacle to development diverts attention from other sources of resistance to change. Indeed, frequently it is a notion that is used by representatives of development agencies to justify or conceal their own technical and political shortcomings.

Generally speaking it is not fear of losing their traditional way of life which leads peasants to oppose technological innovation, for what is at stake is not a particular and distinctively peasant complex of values and beliefs, but a pre-existing balance of economic and political power. At very least, the introduction of new large-scale resources leads to a re-appraisal and usually a devaluation of existing economic opportunities and strategies. And the presence in the community of outside development officials with patronage resources at their command poses a special threat to traditional political elites, challenging both their status and the basis of their power. In these circumstances, the most tempting and readily available strategy open to them is to seek to discredit the moral authority of the development officials themselves, by accusing them of arbitrariness, corruption and technical incompetence, a strategy only too often rendered plausible by the developer's concern with the engineering rather than the social costs of his actions.<sup>14</sup>

Massive technological change causes social dislocation, which in its turn produces tension, conflict and hostility. But in peasant societies, at least, resistance to change is neither universal nor unqualified. It is not to change as such which peasants are opposed, but to particular reforms, introduced in particular circumstances by particular development agencies. Moreover, not all social groups within such societies are equally hostile to innovation. Indeed, one of the clearest conclusions to come out of the somewhat amorphous body of sociological case studies of development is that almost invariably some members of peasant communities (usually those with a low degree of commitment to the traditional social order) take greater advantage of the new economic opportunities offered by technological change than others.<sup>15</sup>

From the outset, it was apparent that one of the major themes of this study would be the conflict engendered by large-scale technological innovation. Within two years of the initial announcement of the decision to build a petro-chemical complex on the north Puglian coast (and well before I began fieldwork), the Manfredonia project had become the focus of widespread discussion and controversy. In the local elections in Manfredonia in the summer of 1968, the industrialisation issue had dominated the campaign, and most (though not all) of the political parties and labour organisations had protested at the high social costs which the town would have to pay. At the national level, the ENI scheme was criticised both in parliament and in the

press on the grounds that it would create a serious ecological hazard.<sup>16</sup>

For ENI such protests, although politically embarrassing, were not entirely unforeseen, since previous experience of similar projects in the South had led them to expect hostility and criticism from the host population. In this context, the development of the second petro-chemical complex in Gela in Sicily in 1959 had set the pattern.<sup>17</sup> The original decision to build a factory complex there had been favourably, indeed, enthusiastically received. Subsequently, as details of the scheme became available, and the company began recruiting its first batch of workers, popular appeal rapidly gave way to criticism and opposition. This, in turn, created a legacy of mistrust and ill-feeling which was to vitiate future relationships between factory and town, and amongst the industrial labour force.<sup>18</sup> A somewhat similar sequence of events followed the establishment of the third petro-chemical complex at Ferrandina after 1963.

That this pattern<sup>19</sup> should be repeated yet again in Manfredonia was surprising only in so far as it appeared to contradict the main managerial explanation of the reasons behind such opposition. For many of ENI's middle and senior managers and technical staff (some of whom also worked on the Manfredonia project) the experience of Gela not only furnished a model of community resistance to industrialisation but it also appeared to offer a plausible and politically acceptable explanation of it.<sup>20</sup> In their view the tensions and conflict between town and factory were the direct product of a clash between two distinct and mutually incomprehensible cultures - between the norms and values of an isolated and stagnant rural community and the needs of a modern, technologically sophisticated, bureaucratically organised, industrial complex.<sup>21</sup>

But although this explanation had an air of plausibility in Gela in the early 1960s it was much less convincing when applied to Manfredonia a decade later. In marked contrast with Gela, Manfredonia was located within one of the most prosperous and most rapidly developing regions in the South. With one medium-sized modern industrial plant, and a number of smaller, more traditional firms, the town had already felt some of the consequences of industrialisation; and, as a result of almost two decades of large-scale emigration to the North and to Common Market countries, some of its inhabitants had first-hand experience of factory conditions and modern industrial technology.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, not the least of ENI's reasons for supporting the research on which this study is based, was a genuine desire to understand the reasons for the opposition which their project encountered in what they felt should have been the very much more favourable conditions of Manfredonia.

The Manfredonia project, then, presented a number of interesting research possibilities. First, the controversy surrounding the establishment of the plant offered a dramatic and catalytic context in which to analyse in depth the reaction of the local community to the advent of industry. Secondly, it provided a suitable background against which to re-evaluate the cultural obstacle hypothesis. If traditional customs and beliefs had any force as an impediment to change, they were most likely to be operative in the early stages of development. Thirdly, since relationships between town and factory were not confined to Manfredonia, it was necessary to provide a wider economic and political context than is usual with anthropological case studies (a necessity which was also a virtue since only too often such studies have presented a distorted, wormseye, view of the development process as a result of their exclusive concern with community level analysis). The framework in which major decisions concerning the project were made was national rather than local; and in an attempt to influence their outcome the inhabitants of Manfredonia were obliged to make use of political networks and pressure groups at a regional and national level. Whilst it was clearly beyond the scope of this study to make a full assessment of all the external technical, economic and political factors involved, they were important not only because of their undoubted effect on the success of the project as a whole, but also because the experiences gained by local politicians in their dealings with planning authorities, ENI representatives and politicians outside the town, vividly coloured their perception of the role of the factory within it.

Although this study is primarily concerned with the relationship between the 'agents' and the 'objects' of change within a specific social context, it also seeks to make a more general contribution both to the analysis of political systems in peasant societies and to south Italian ethnography. In the field of peasant politics its main contribution is to the understanding of patron-client relationships, which, in recent years, have become a major focus of anthropological interest. A recurrent theme in this study is that patronage models of political behaviour not only affected the way in which the inhabitants of Manfredonia perceived and tried to modify the industrial decision making process, but also largely determined the tactics employed by ENI to quell local discontent and opposition. Furthermore, the Manfredonia project also presented an excellent opportunity for testing a hypothesis which has become an anthropological commonplace in the discussion of patron-clientage, the argument that patronage systems offer a means whereby people at the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy can influence the outcome of decisions on which their welfare depends.<sup>23</sup> If grass-roots participation in decision making is indeed one of the properties

of patron-client systems, it ought to be possible to demonstrate its importance in the general process of adjustment to change in Manfredonia.

A final, ethnographic, aim was to document the social effects of Italian industrial development policy in a geographically restricted area. With a number of detailed studies of land reform and emigration (for the most part set in Puglia or the neighbouring region of Basilicata) completed or under way, the earlier phases of Italian development policy have already received considerable anthropological attention.<sup>24</sup> Not the least of the objectives of my research was to add a further dimension to this series of studies which should ultimately produce a detailed, longitudinal, analysis of the changing social structure and development of the Italian South.

### Notes to Chapter 1

1. ENI (*Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi* - the Italian State Petroleum Corporation) is a large holding company set up in 1953 which operates primarily through other mixed holding companies which it controls in whole or in part. The most important are: AGIP which is mainly concerned with the production refining and sale of petroleum products; *AGIP Nucleare* which concentrates on work in the field of nuclear energy; SNAM which exploits, transports and sells methane and other natural gases; and ANIC which deals in the hydrochemical sector. It was ANIC which was responsible for building the petro-chemical plant in Manfredonia.
2. See Sahlins, M. "On the Sociology of Primitive Exchange" in Banton (ed) 1965.
3. Refusal to answer the questionnaire at all was fairly unusual. Many interviewees, however, responded by avoiding or refusing to answer a high proportion of the questions put to them. Both refusal and avoidance rates varied directly with social distance between interviewers and interviewees.
4. For an interesting and much fuller account of Italian development policy see Allen and MacLennan, 1970.
5. Hilderbrand, G.H. 1965, p. 291. In the same period average real incomes in Northern Italy fell by 4%.
6. The *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* was originally set up for a ten year period. Its charter has been extended on several occasions. It finally went into liquidation in 1984.



7. IRI (*Instituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale*). Together ENI and IRI account for over 90% of the annual investment of state controlled firms. See Allen and MacLennan, *op.cit.*, p.62
8. Areas were required by law to have a population of not less than 200,000 inhabitants and nuclei at least 75,000.
9. The very hurried introduction of the Land Reform programme in 1950, a programme quite specifically designed to take the sting out of peasant protest in the rural South, is a good example of the safety-valve functions of development policy. The proliferation of designated industrial growth centres, largely in response to political and electoral pressures both at the grass roots and political 'notable' level, is just one of many possible illustrations of the way in which political considerations affect the distribution and led to the dispersal of scarce development resources.
10. The most important of these studies are Abergglen, 1958; Epstein, 1958, Kapferer, 1972; Nash, 1951; Savage, 1964; Sheth, 1968. The studies by Kapferer and Sheth are more concerned with social relationships within the factory, than the societal consequences of the introduction of industrial technology
11. See, for example, the essays By N.J.Smelser and W.E.Moore in Hoselitz and Moore, 1961; and also Moore, 1965.
12. Abergglen, *op.cit.*
13. Nash, *op.cit.*, p. 17-18, and Sheth, *op.cit.* chapters 4 & 9. Recent research into the recruitment of labour forces in various parts of the third world would suggest that the so-called problem of labour commitment has been greatly exaggerated. Thus, for example, the evidence from both India and Nigeria is that labour shortages, absenteeism and turnover rates amongst factory workers are not greatly different than amongst comparable groups in advanced industrial economies. See Kilby, 1969; Part 4, ch.7; and also, Morris, 1965, chap.11.
14. Mayer, 'Patrons and brokers' in Freeman (ed) 1967, pp.167-189.
15. See for example Bailey, 1957, Part III; and Epstein, 1962. An interesting illustration of this point from Italy is provided by Davis and Stirling (1967) who show that the most successful land reform peasants were those who had come from distant towns and villages, and who had, therefore, fewest social ties and commitments in nearby settlements.
16. For various details see chapter 5.
17. The various ENI petro-chemical plants are numbered according to their chronological sequence. The first was built at Ravenna in Northern Italy, the second at Gela in Sicily, the third at Ferrandina in Lucania, the

fourth at Manfredonia. There have been a number of studies about the effects of industrialisation in Gela, the most recent of which is Hytten and Marchioni, 1970. A brief account of some of the consequences of the Ferrandina project can be found in Davis, 1973.

18. See Hytten and Marchioni, *op.cit.* ch.5.
19. i.e. the first two stages of it. I have no information about the way in which relationship between town and factory developed after the plant went into production.
20. Politically acceptable in the sense that it exonerated the company from responsibility for what had gone wrong.
21. For detailed examples of this view, and also a refutation of it, see Hytten and Marchioni, *op.cit.*, pp.39-42 and p.75.
22. But see chapters 3 & 7 below.
23. See for example Boissevain 1966; and also Campbell, 1964.
24. Davis, 1973; Davis and Stirling, *op.cit.*; Lopreato, 1967; Silverman, 1968; Wade, 1971.