"MEZZOGIORNO, MERIDIONALISTI, MERIDIONALITÀ, MERIDIOS"

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1. A premise and some justifications

During a talk that followed the programme of this conference, Prof. Maria Paola Pagnini convinced me with her irresistible intellectual fervour that the location and the subject of the meeting were definitively going to attract Neapolitan geographers who wanted to discuss old and new data about the so-called *questione meridionale* from the point of view of cultural geography.

That was an inspirational suggestion. It opened interesting hypothesis, as tackling the issues of space and society in Southern Italy in problematic and constructive terms. These issues have been at the core of national policies for years, though over the last decade they have turned a remote memory to many Italian political and social actors. We are now confronting the subject again, in the far Italian North-East, in close proximity to those movements that have shifted national interests, both culturally and politically.

As geographers, here we have the opportunity to interweave the battered texture of the *geography of the gap* with new threads; new colours and new materials could give the whole picture all the nuances and colour varieties that can represent completely the complex reality of Southern Italy. A brighter colour will be brought in by a mix of new and old insights, and interdisciplinary contaminations which have built up the *corpus* of cultural geography through the contribution of foreign and Italian authors, to our distinguished colleague Claval's systemization, and more recently to Vallega's.

The captivating idea beyond this work is defining the state of Southern Italy territory and society not specifically through the analysis of statistics and cartographies, but through the interpretation of *individual tracks* (according one of the suggestions of the conference's manifesto). In sight of the meeting in Gorizia, many older and younger geographers of the Neapolitan "geographical school" were captivated by this idea.

However, as far as I am concerned, I did not take long to realize that committing myself to reflect on subjects such as *Mezzogiorno,* the concern and the commitment for the issues of Southern Italy (*meridionalismo*), and the spirit of Southern Italy (*meridionalità*) within an essay for a conference, was a rather optimistic and conceited attempt.

Such a work implies the need to question the issue of *Southern identity*, comparing older and newer data, paying attention to how stereotypes can distort perspectives, revising some cultural approaches that have formed the different currents of *meridionalista* thought and controlled the birth of theories and practices for political actions in Southern Italy.

Such reflections brought me through different readings of the Southern land, from mythology (the Garden of the Hesperides), to the natural syntax (a geologic disaster), and through the different socio-historical analysis, from Salvemini's "pessimism of reason", to the invocation for a revival in the hands of Dorso's "a hundred iron men", to the bitter observations of the global diffusion of organised crime. A fact proved evidently true: this paper will not treat exhaustively the subject despite my commitment following Maria Paola Pagnini cheering words. This paper will be the representation of some reflections that have been suggested also by a more recent bibliography, in a series of insets on the subject and the theme of the conference. I do hope my work will be a hint for future research and study.

2. Hereditary questions

A year and two months ago was the twentieth anniversary of the death of Francesco Compagna, the youngest of our group, a journalist, a member of parliament, a minister, and above all, a geographer. He was a geographer because, as he would often underline, he had pinpointed theories and methods in geography studies that were particularly suitable for an in-depth analysis of the problems of Southern Italy. In fact, the most significant contribution to literature that has dealt with these issues come from those texts that reveal a "geographical

approach", independently from the author cultural formation and profession. That is the case of Giuseppe Maria Galanti (a noble visitor of the provinces of the reassessed Kingdom of Naples), historian and politician Giustino Fortunato, Leopoldo Franchetti of 1875 *Relazione*, Francesco Saverio Nitti of 1910 *Inchiesta* on farmers, and the vast majority of agriculture economists as Sereni and Rossi Doria, historians as Ciasca, De Rosa, Galasso, Placanica, Bevilacqua. Last but not least, Ghisleri and Maranelli, professional geographers from the first half of XX century.

The twentieth anniversary of Compagna's death inspired essay and interviews to those who had been politically and culturally close to him. One of these was historian Giuseppe Galasso who stated to a journalist from *Corriere della Sera* that Campagna had no successors. Of course Galasso was making reference to a cultural, ideological and political heritage that had a considerable extent, and as such could be hardly handed over to others. However, part of Campagna's heritage is outdated, as the idea of a special policy for Southern Italy pursued by operations such as the *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* did, even though this kind of policy has been one of the best initiatives of the first 25 years since the birth of the Italian Republic. Moreover, over the twenty years that followed Compagna's death, changes in the political and cultural context have altered typical attitudes of *meridionalistica* tradition. For example, regionalism, a current of *meridionalista*, catholic and laic thought, used to be regarded as a possible instrument for economical and social advance in most local autonomies.

Giuseppe Galasso's judgement was produced by the idea of *meridionalismo* as a historical category, as an equitable political philosophy, in the perspective of a lasting "questione meridionale" that would reach the third millennium. But in my opinion, Galasso's judgement was not a comprehensive one. What I mean here is that in the perspective of a human geographer some of the elements of Galasso's thought are still heritable, claimed and promoted; some others were definitively outdated even before Galasso died or immediately after his death.

As regards Compagna's potential successors, we need to link his name to another *meridionalista* of Republican Italy, Pasquale Saraceno. The older economist from Lombardia and the young Neapolitan geographer shared ideas, projects and friendship. Both influenced the government in favour of Southern issues; probably Saraceno, founder and president of Svimez, had a stronger influence than Compagna as a politician.

I would say that Saraceno's economical policy and Compagna's geography had a *meridionalista* attitude based on a Cartesian ground. The first had a Christian afflatus, the latter had an Enlightenment faith in the need for progress. Both conceptions were underlay by a perception that today would be described as 'geo-political': in a newly formed State as Italy was, the presence of a weaker or ill part could endanger the survival of the organism (*Italy will be what Mezzogiorno will be*: this was their common statement).

Why Cartesian? Compagna and Saraceno were very considerate of territory, their physical nature, their history, but they were aware of what other countries (USA, France) had done to face problems of regional unbalance in terms of economical development policies and territorial readjustment. Both firmly believed that in a modern State that could produce resources and use technologies there could be no hostile geo-morphological condition that cannot be overcome, there is no weakness in the production system that cannot be reconstructed.

If between Northern and Southern Italy there was a divide in terms of territory facilities there was no choice but that of building roads, railways, electrical and telephone networks, waterworks. This was the main concern of *meridionalista* current between 1947-57. Later it became clear that infrastructures alone could not be an element that would favour new activities; they could not create the necessary employment and absorb the flows of workers that exceeded from a renovated agriculture. Emigration flows were extremely dense, so *meridionalista* action took to the road to the policy of industrialization. Back in the beginning of the twentieth century, Nitti's industrialization policy had been regarded as the most encouraging one for an economical rebirth in the depressed area of Naples – an industrial 'therapy' for the South was conceived.

Saraceno's keynesism and Compagna's shift from regional geography to "active geography" lead them to pursue the aim of the development of large enterprises in the South,

capitalized by the State either directly or through indirect contribution to private investors. This was the most suitable policy, the one that could give birth to both ends of the production cycle, and transform the South from a rural society to a urban one. This would trigger such cultural changes that Southern Italy could get closer to Europe without slipping into the Mediterranean sea.

The industrialization policy is an element of Compagna and Saraceno's ideological and cultural heritage that certainly cannot be a part of their 'heritable assets' because it simply failed: the petrochemicals and the steel industries have dissolved, state-controlled industry complex has been fragmented and dismissed, minor local activities have collapsed.

Many have written on the causes of this failure. One of these was Piero Barucci in a lecture for the hundredth anniversary of Saraceno's birth. Barucci pinpoints reasons that are external to Mezzogiorno (international circumstances and competition, structural transformation of the large enterprise, shift of basic industry to emerging countries), that have concentrated resources to more innovative and resistant sectors than national production systems. *Ubi maior, minor cessat*.

With respect to internal causes, Barucci maintains that the industrial policy "has contaminated Mezzogiorno's political life, it has overturned the way state-controlled enterprises would work, it has represented a case of inefficient exploitation of public finance". Another economist, Gianfranco Viesti, gives a harsher judgement to the entire system of 'extraordinary interventions' which have contributed to shrink local ruling class' responsibility.

Were Saraceno and Compagna blind? I would not say so. They were idealists but they did not cherish illusions. Since late 70s, both denounced the distortions of extraordinary interventions. Compagna would talk of a progressive imposition of "*meridionalismo* of power" over a "*meridionalismo* of thought". Saraceno foresaw the formation of a new social block that included speculators from the North, and Southern politicians and dealers. This was going to be as dangerous as the social block of Southern land-owners and Northern industrialists, which Antonio Gramsci had criticised after the unity of Italy. Saraceno and Compagna were aware that in the long term these distortions would have caused the disintegration of any *meridionalista* policy. And that is exactly what happened.

Both were consistent until the very end (Compagna died in 1982, at 61; Saraceno in 1991, at 87). They both maintained that overcoming the regional divide was the key problem in Italy. They acknowledged that despite all the mistakes and squandering, the extraordinary intervention had uplifted Southern populations from backwardness and misery. They knew that rather than problems of 'structures' (either territorial or economical), the real issue was a problem of cultures, of civil organization, education to politics, adherence to the public interest rather than to personal or criminal interest.

Compagna had studied the Mezzogiorno for a long time through the criteria of regional geography, and in the last years of his life he paid much attention to the social phenomena that had been revealed (rather than caused) by 1980 earthquake. He was greatly discomforted and he acknowledged that (as Vincenzo Cuoco had written after 1799 revolution) any attempt of "dressing a country with some other country's dress" would have faced great difficulties.

3. "Questione meridionale" and questions of identity

The observations of the previous chapter lead to a question: is it still proper to consider the existence of a "questione meridionale"? And if so, in what way should we consider it?

In the lecture mentioned above, Piero Barucci describes Mezzogiorno as a "vast and populated area of one of the most industrialized countries in the world… which consumes more than what it produces", which "cannot either save or invest locally, to accelerate growth. It needs external capital and skills". Svimez continuosly shows that Southern Italy is a marginal area compared to 'strong' European regions, with such a level of unemployment that it can be hardly recovered by a de-industrialized economic system.

Mezzogiorno is certainly a marginal area, but not a miserable one. Economist Viesti, author of the essay *Abolishing Mezzogiorno,* argues that Southern regions have reached a pro capita income that on a world-scale places them in the limited sphere of richness, not among underdeveloped areas.

Further elements can be searched in an analysis on the question "what is Italian Mezzogiorno?" published in a special issue of the journal "Meridiana" journal in 1997. The introductory essay, by Cersosimo and Donzelli, describes Mezzogiorno as "a place of reality and a territory of representation", which is still "the greatest territorial metaphor of united Italy" The authors stated that there is no point in discussing of an undifferentiated *questione meridionale*; it is necessary to address the issue as a plurality of "Southern peculiarities". In this regard, "'peculiar' does not mean 'abnormal', 'ill', 'deviated'… it is remiscent of geography and history, and of the complex store of material heritage and sediments, of culture and institutions that define a territory and its possible developments."

An accurate analysis of such peculiarities with reference to some "strategic territories" lead the authors to observations that were not completely negative. Infrastructures in the South are "an absurd mix of profusion and shortage" that is not well managed, but they have reached a level that is "compatible with the economic development". The production system is still "coping with a structural fragility" but it has some points of strength: the car industry ring (Bari-Termoli-Cassino-Pomigliano), plus Melfi, the clothing industry area, the shoe district, and the "sofa triangle" between Puglia and Basilicata. New perspectives have been opened by the so-called 'territorial agreements'. The unemployment rate is considerable but social conditions are not 'explosive' thanks to "compensation factors as family and welfare".

So which are the Southern peculiarities that are more alarming? The authors clearly disapprove the "indestructible stereotype" that describers Southern Italians as "'anthropologically', 'historically' and 'sociologically' resistant to 'public spirit'". Nonetheless, they admit that some negative elements of the culture of Southern Italians actually exist: the "scarce application of rules", the "the non-impersonal attitude of public behaviour", or the "greed of patronage" that characterize regional administrations more than the central national administration. Moreover, the common belief that "the policies of patronage have been a fundamental aspect in the shaping of Southern society", is actually a proven statement, which has been demonstrated by historians and sociologists, from Salvemini to Putnam. Nevertheless, according to Cersosimo and Donzelli, an increase in public spirit seems to be fostering associationism as the space of "mediators of consent" is reducing. As for the incidence of organized crime, the phenomenon is unchanged and it persists in four regions (Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria); in the rest of Italy it is within other national levels.

In conclusion, there is no *questione meridionale* as such but a series of 'peculiarities' that have peaks in given areas, mainly on the Tyrrhenian side. Certainly, Southern regions have different levels of development and different levels of quality of life. Hence, it is reasonable to address different territorial and social situations through distinct policies.

Back to Barucci's lecture, he firmly believes that the *questione meridionale* is still a valid issue. To Barucci this is due not just to the way the South consumes and lowers its growth; he argues that some causes are to be found in the political, sociological or historic dimension, i.e. in a cultural dimension (and problem).

Barucci presents these causes through an hypothesis. Two Italians of same age, sex, education and wealth: one lives in industrial North-East, the other lives in an internal area in the South. Both apply for a series of services from the State (job, tax refund, planning permissions, ordinary law…). As long as "both people will refer, *even just ideally*, to different markets, with different structures, different people, and a different degree of transparency, the territorial continuity between the two areas is economically denied". It does not really matter if the boundary line between the two areas is not sharp, or if the line moves in time; as Barucci observes, "in economical terms that discontinuity defines different competitive qualities and conditions".

If differences are relevant "it means that there is a *questione*; it does not matter how we call it, but probably the term 'questione meridionale' has still got reasons to exist". This problem "requires a policy of selection of human and material resources", that guarantees that "the mechanism of producing life, in the typical fullness of a democratic society" will be equal in both areas.

The change of a spread culture in not an easy task. The more the 'patronage game' wins over the public spirit, the less the market works and development grows. Despite the system and the initiatives taken in favour of Mezzogiorno, "a wood of bushes and trees has been

growing" and alternative bureaucracies and 'intermediations' have developed. As Barucci concludes, this recalls Einaudi's expectations on the times that Italy needed for an actual unity.

4. The Questione meridionale as an urban question

In this section I will bring the discussion back to some structural elements that highlight evident aspects of a change in the South.

Mezzogiorno is not a rural society anymore, it has become mainly urban. This was what Compagna hoped for, as he saw the birth of a network of small and medium-sized towns as a fundamental condition for the economical development and the start of a general cultural and social overturn.

In fact, the dynamics of Southern populations have been intense. In a vertical dimension, people have moved from elevated places to the plain; horizontally, they have moved from internal to coastal areas. The concentration in urban centres has caused the formation of thick metropolitan areas in Campania, Sicily, Puglia and Abruzzo. Mostly small and medium-sized centres have enlarged. The change has implied a visible waste of space and considerable environment alterations, due to an uncontrolled building on the coastal areas for tourism.

Quantitative aspects prevail on quantitative ones in the expansion of the urbanization of all Southern regions. Space waste and demographic accumulation have been greater than the increase of quality of services in large and medium centres. When in 1967 Francesco Compagna discussed about a "policy for the city" in Mezzogiorno, which needed the cooperation of central and local governments, he outlined a complex but not utopian system: small centres with a role of coordinators and first link of the a commercial chain to boost agriculture productivity; medium-sized centres with a role of service for more industrialized areas, well-coordinated to regional metropolis that are able to carry out high level functions ('quaternary sector') in education, culture, finance.

The model to pursue in the South was a "civil urbanization". It would have required the transfer of a considerable part of Italian industry to Southern regions. Otherwise, the North would have risked a "miserable urbanism" caused by the demographic escape from economically depressed regions. The experience of the last two decades shows that this model has not been achieved. This is especially due to the lack of industrialization. Small and medium-sized manufacturing companies that were born South of Garigliano and Tronto rivers, in Sicily and in Sardinia, have not produced enough employment to heal the profound wound that the collapse of state-controlled industry had provoked.

Many had denounced the inherent weakness of a state-assisted industrial system. From a social point of view, another negative factor was the fact that new industrial initiatives had chosen new districts rather than areas that had lost ancient activities. Moreover, from a cultural point of view, the de-industrialization of major Southern urban centres had destroyed the structures that could boost an economic and cultural growth.

Naples and Palermo were the oldest industrialized areas and with the highest demographic concentration; Sicily, Calabria, Puglia and Sardinia were the main 'poles' of state-assisted enterprise realised until the 70s, and they were surrounded by new urbanized districts. Here the productive crisis has been harder, it has stolen space to older forms of employment and it has left no room to the creation of new jobs for the young. The regression of large working population strata from working-class to lumpenproletariat was a disastrous phenomenon. The urban lumpenproletariat was doomed to a pathological expansion of the service industry: insignificant commercial activities, bureaucracy, casual jobs, or even off-the-book employment and crime.

However, the alternative fate that Compagna had foreseen did not actually come true. Northern areas did not fall into a "miserable urbanism" caused by migration flows from Mezzogiorno. Over the last two decades only small streams of immigrants left the South and settled in Central and Northern regions due to the reasons outlined in the previous section: the older unemployed population were held by different forms of public assistance; the youngest were held by family support. Expanding Northern enterprise has had to turn to extra-EU immigration instead of moving to Southern regions. Many companies have rather moved abroad to ex-communist or Asian countries.

Mezzogiorno's metropolis have lost also a few tertiary higher functions when market conditions, human mistakes and political guilt have provoked the collapse of ancient financial and credit institutions. Large banks that were to promote many enterprises, cultural initiatives, executive activities in Naples, Palermo, other major cities and correspondent areas of influence, have been absorbed by competitive banks in Northern Italy or foreign banks. The drop in employment has been worsened by the loss of autonomy.

What is left to support the functional structure of Southern metropolitan areas? Certainly, culture persists fed by ancient traditions of creativity, drama, music and art. But this is limited to intellectual niches or to local initiatives that do not reach firm and vast market dimension as in Rome or Milan that can support the growth of profiting sectors such as publishing, cinema, television or music. Also the university survives, the only institution that can actually train new professionals and foster research. Only a few cities in the South have no university centre. However, if there is no demand from expanding productive system, basic applied research decreases and the same happens to employment for new graduates.

In most Southern regions there is a spread feeling of uneasiness, which can be perceived especially in urbanized centres that grow according to demographic thickening, as in Naples, Palermo, Catania and Bari. Comparing the quality of life in corresponding centres in Central and Northern Italy the divide is evident.

This is occurring in a Mezzogiorno that is not "the vast reign without roads and cities" that outlined Nitti; there is no "geologic disruption" as Giustino Fortunato observed. Today Mezzogiorno feels the weight of a long and tiring evolution from quinine to computer, from misery and epidemic to technological modernity. Urbanized Mezzogiorno has a low level of industrialization, cities consume high quantities of resources from abroad and they do not capitalize enough; much is squandered in the hypertrophy of local, regional or national bureaucracy, or in a fragmented commercial system. Southern Italy ends up as a subsidized market for the outlet of Northern and foreign productions, or as the field of action for Mafia and Camorra interferences.

I have previously observed that through the analysis of the entire Southern territory we can easily detect elements of diversity rather then pinpointing features of uniformity. Some quantitative differences (demographic density, main economic activities) between provinces already existed. New diversities emerge from the different evolutions of cities and populations, and from the evolutions of the quality of life, as structural and cultural indicators evidence.

It is now evident that in traditional geographic-statistic structure that carries the definition of 'Mezzogiorno' a slow fragmentation is taking place. Abruzzo and Molise, linked to the Adriatic coast and the Aegean Sea, have detached from this situation; Puglia as well has found better perspectives on the Adriatic side. Tourism has firmly connected Sardinia to Northern interests and market logic.

"Meridionalità" as an existential condition rather than a geographic status seems to be an exclusive peculiarity of Campania, Calabria and Sicily, and their metropolitan areas, inhabited by "*meridios*", a term that enlarges with racist sarcasm Northern subculture vocabulary.

5. "Questione culturale" vs. cultural resources?

Mezzogiorno and its most populated and extended areas are still one of the most serious problems in Italy, though it is not perceived anymore as the main *Italian* issue. The main problems of Mezzogiorno are its cities, its populations and its culture that are handed over to new generations. These could be hypothesis that consistently conclude the observations exposed in the previous chapters. But these are controversial hypothesis.

In the second chapter I listed pro and con opinions about considering the validity of a *questione meridionale* today. Some believe that the divide between North and South should be addressed as a problem of the entire country. Others maintain that today's problems in the South should be estimated singularly and addressed according to their significance, independently from their location.

From my point of view, this controversy has advocates of either positions both in the centre-right wing and in the centre-left wing. In the right-wing coalition the discussion is characterised by the main geographic component of the electorate (North for *Lega*, Centre-

South for *Alleanza Nazionale*). As for the left-wing, the Southern issue is a significant part of the ideological debate within *Ds*, especially among Southern intellectuals that have joined the party or feel close to it.

I am aware, though, that my conclusions about Southern cities may seem rather controversial. I do regard it as the most crucial issue in this part of Italy. Actually, I consider it the real *question* of *questione meridionale*, despite many think that some Southern cities are the evidence of a sort of 'redemption'. I do not neglect these observations and to some extent I justify them. But I do only for some aspects, which is not enough to change my vision of Southern urban conditions as a key problem.

Any observer of Italian political and social phenomena will remember that not long ago the mass media would talk about a "season of mayors". This made reference to the mayors of some large urban centres in Mezzogiorno (Naples was the first on the list), who had started notable innovative and incisive policies. Many saw a new wave of initiatives that could break with old administration schemes and revive economy and social spirit. Some would speak of a "new renaissance", others of competitive "urban marketing".

I think it is undisputable that the role played by some mayors in the South (particularly, in Naples) was they key for the formulation and the implementation of new policies on town planning, transports, street furniture, and the exploitation of artistic and natural heritage.

Such policies have given a new look to the cities and increased the value of urban materials, traditions and symbols. A series of positive messages based on the exaltation of different typical features (from architecture to food traditions, from art to music) has been easily caught by mass media; so the new flow of positive information counteracted the usual stereotyped negative messages.

The efficacy of the message has been increased by the role of "communicators", i.e. the mayors. Among the leaders of Southern cities' administrations such as Bari, Salerno, Catania, and Palermo, to name a few, certainly Naples' mayor, Antonio Bassolino, stood out; his eight-year long office has given him a widespread reputation.

Especially in Naples, the renewed image of the city, both in material and spiritual terms, has had actual effects. Squares, roads and monuments have been restored, new underground stations have been opened and enriched of works of art by famous artists; at the same time the city has revived the myth of *Grand Tour* both in Italians and foreign travellers. Naples has been sold mainly as a "cultural good", it is a tourist destination itself, not just a hub for tours to the islands, Pompeii, or the Sorrento Riviera. The spirit of renovation has required investments for the creation of new hotels and the renovation of older ones, as well as other restoration works in tourist facilities. State administrations have been urged to back the favourable opportunity and finance the restoration of monuments, organize expositions in museums, renovate the net of roads, railways and sea transports.

There was a positive effect on employment and tourism has given a healthy shot in the arm to the lazy Neapolitan economy. Many hope that tourism can be a profiting substitute for the failed manufacturing and tertiary industry. Back at the beginning of the twentieth century a debate between "tourist Naples" and "industrial Naples" had finally favoured the latter; industry seemed the most effective solution for an economical revival of the city, where large parts of the population lived in conditions of misery and illiteracy. In spite of the grand renovation works following 1884 cholera epidemic, which had overturned the planning of the areas around the port and reclaimed the most evident faults, the average conditions were very poor.

Of course today life conditions are very different, as well in Naples as in other Southern urban centres. Nonetheless, inefficient production systems cause high unemployment rates and increase a general sense of uneasiness. Psychological mechanisms of growing expectation (increased also by media) create new demands from the poorer classes which cannot be fulfilled by temporary work and state assistance. Such parts of the population live in old and degraded areas, as well as in council houses districts that usually enclose the limits of urban centres.

Suburbs have no specific urban function, they lack of any service or activity beside basic shops and a few disrupted soccer fields. Naples metropolitan area extends all over the province and reaches the province of Caserta. In Naples' hinterland the situation is almost out

of any control: public facilities are endangered by a lack of maintenance and frequent vandalism, the industrial areas and centres that still survive (mechanics, telephones, clothing, plastics, furniture, etc.) suffer from the urban disorder and the frequent problems on road and transport network.

In this specific portion of Naples the effect of tourism will never be perceived, unless through the employment of local workers or the expansion of local industries that can be competitive in the production of supplies for tourist facilities, hotels and restaurants.

The young might feel the urge to escape from degraded areas, but this might cause a growing conflict in the use of those spaces that the economy of tourism would rather limit to tourists. The areas that now feature restored architectures, modern street furniture, bars, venues and even shows and music festivals attracts flocks of young people. The crowds that gather at night or during the weekend in the city's 'showcase' (the sea front, the pedestrian precincts, etc.) could be regarded as a new version of the *local colour*, with mopeds and hi-fi's to replace the old mandolins.

The actual concern of tour operators and administrators is the way people from poorer classes might manifest their conditions or protest against the institutions: marches of unemployed workers, interruptions on roads and railways, burning of waste containers; or rather, those phenomena that evidence a lack of control on the territory, led by the attitude of organised crime: from pilferage to smuggling, from violence to extortion.

The tourist 'renaissance' in the area of Naples is therefore limited to certain districts and villages on the coast. The economy of the entire city benefits from it but only within some professional categories. I think that the analysis of Naples could be confirmed by the analysis of other situations in Mezzogiorno and in Sicily. In these areas where an unbalanced economy does not allow the growth of a positive attitude towards the community, the social malaise becomes manifest in a way that will endanger in the long term the positive effects that the 'policy of image' has achieved so far. Neapolitan nonconformist intellectual Goffredo Fofi, who many call a 'subversive *meridionalista*', claims that the "lumpenroletariat of Neapolitan narrow streets" (and the one that lives the entire metropolitan areas, too) – is a "variously besieged tragic minority", which is nonetheless "definitely rich, thanks to illegal activity… but culturally deprived of its own identity… fallen in a sort of aggressive and self-destructive hysteria". Fofi observes that "the 'season of mayors'… has been very short… as in a world economy that has changed completely the track chosen for Naples was the one of tourist service". His conclusions are "sad, even without that feeling of definite defeat of the antique and high hopes that old non-communist *meridionalismo* had raised, the hope of a morale of politics, of a different and more harmonious dimension of democracy, of humanity and society".

I believe we should (and we can) find a compromise between complacent statements about a "new renaissance" and depressed observation on "repeated defeats". If Mezzogiorno still represents a significant *questione* within Italian political and economical scenario, and if the key fault is in Southern dense urban areas and in the culture of the populations that live there, the first target of any intervention is the city.

During the "season of mayors" cities' "cultural resources" were exploited. This actually achieved a higher number of tourists but it was not enough to change the rooted attitude of metropolitan populations.

Nowadays unimportant symbols of modernity overlap an archaic fabric that has been growing through the centuries. History has condemned entire populations to the culture of subordination, both political and economical. This feeling has also been unintentionally propagated by well-established singing, literary and iconographic traditions that still arouse admiration from local and foreign public.

The choice between "hotels and museums" and "port and industry" is not applicable today. Tourism has evolved, it has different demands and dimensions, and it essential. Some have estimated that in the entire South of Italy, or in almost all of it, the right conditions to welcome and develop tourism do exist. However, other sources of wealth are necessary, as productive and manufacturing enterprises. But the latter have other demands, dimensions, necessary locations, links to the metropolitan structure, to the world of research, training, finance. Today's Southern Italy is different from Nitti's and Saraceno's.

I am sure I will not indulge in illusions if I think that there is a way to break the boundaries of old "urban ghettoes" where the culture of subordination resists: these are incubators of "meridios".   Geographers would rather choose urban policies led by local and central administrations, which could affect the territory, at least on a regional scale, and not just on single metropolitan areas. This should be perceived as a way to determine a more balanced relationship between population and territory, to limit the hypertrophy of metropolitan areas that cherish no civil spirit or respect of rules, and to transfer a "city effect" to the emptiness of rural areas, which have been reached by new means of communication while people were leaving.

Following our experience of they way Italian territory has been ruled and managed in the past, we should be extremely sceptic about the actual realism of some indications. This happens each time the administrations have to face wide urban renewals or profound territorial transformations. Immobility has been often the attitude of public administrations, but on the other hand we should still believe that we need new policies that within the logic of market and the European perspective might give new competitiveness to the Southern space. Otherwise this end of the peninsula is condemned to a progressive productive marginality, and to a lasting *cultura meridiana*. Shall this be the population of *meridios*?

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The bibliography on Questione Meridionale's historical, economic, social and geographic aspects is extremely extensive, as well as the documentation on political debate, planning hypothesis, laws and programmes from the post-war until today. Suggesting a sample of this material would not be appropriate. I will list the works of the authors who I quoted in the test and I will add a few more who have been included in my analysis: Cafiero S., 1980, *La questione meridionale*, Le Monnier, Firenze; Chiaromonte-Galasso, 1980, *L'Italia dimezzata, dibattito sulla questione meridionale*, Laterza, Bari; Galasso G., 1978, *Passato e presente del meridionalismo*, Guida, Napoli; ID., 1982, *L'altra Europa. Per una antropologia storica del Mezzogiorno d'Italia*, Mondadori, Milano. La Palombara J., 1967, *Clientela e Parentela*, Comunità, Milano; Putnam R., 1993, *La tradizione civica nelle regioni italiane,* Mondadori, Milano, and the anthologies: Capecelatro and other (a cura di.), 1974, *I nuovi termini della "questione meridionale"*, Savelli, Roma; Pasquinelli C. (a cura di.), 1977, *Antropologia culturale e Questione meridionale*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze.