1. Introduction

Apparently, development, Southern Italy and cultural geography are not related to one another. One could argue that tackling the issues of development and Italian Mezzogiorno, in the context of cultural geography is not a proper argument.

Nevertheless, anything, someway or another, can be a cultural issue; precisely, the issues connected with development and Southern Italy are certainly a 'cultural fact', which can be approached in different ways depending on the culture and the ideology one advocates.

Therefore, these issues can perfectly fit the context of cultural geography; but before getting to the heart of the argument I would like to quote a question I found about 40 years ago in a book by Jean Poncet (Poncet, 1968 and 1970): "Is underdevelopment due entirely or partly to natural factors?". Certainly there is a straightforward coincidence between the so-called Third World countries and tropical and sub-tropical climate areas: only in a few cases underdevelopment reaches countries in the temperate areas. As Poncet wondered, should we believe that "the value of geographic determinism, which has been long rejected – and rightly so – is the main cause for the explanation of human factors?". In other words, should we believe that the underdevelopment of given countries is caused by climate, soil poverty, shortage of water and other natural resources?

In order not to give simple deterministic interpretations and determine if underdevelopment depends on natural factors, we should firstly explain why the countries that today live in total technological, economic and social backwardness are those which were identified in the past with the whole mankind.

Evidently, with this new historical element the answer is more complex and it cannot be simply solved with deterministic interpretations.

In remote ages, tropical regions could be considered far more advanced than temperate areas today. Rural and then urban civilizations appeared firstly in Middle East, India, China, Andean and Central America: exactly the ones that are ruled by underdevelopment today.

Mediterranean countries, for example, have been the real 'cradle' of Western civilization: Rome and Athens speak for themselves. But after the age of great discoveries, North-West Europe's economic boost and spirit of enterprise totally cut those countries out. As Pierre George (George, 1968) wrote, "they became lands of archaism, both in Europe (Spain, Italian Mezzogiorno, Southern Balkan Peninsula), on Western Asian coast, and in Maghreb". That is, when a mainly rural civilization has become industrial or industrialized, the 'needs' have changed and the countries that were not able to meet them rapidly and efficiently have gone to the forefront of economic and social development. So, underdevelopment is "defined and acknowledged by the inability of its victims to exploit the natural environment in a modern way and to live in the same environment in the same conditions as before" (Poncet).

Southern Italy is a valid example of what has just been mentioned: the Magna Graecia whose people were not able to exploit the natural environment in a different way; now they cannot keep living in this environment as they did two thousand years ago, in a world that has discovered a whole series of different ways of life and a range of different needs, either real or fictitious ones.

2. Should development be abolished?

The debate on the concept of development dates back to at least thirty years ago, as in 1972 the first report of MIT at Club di Roma on humanity dilemmas was published in Italy: it tackled the limits of development.

Since then at least two key stages should be remembered: 1987 Brundtland report and the integration by UNO of the concept of 'human development'.
Since a few years ago, the term 'development' itself has been questioned (Latouche) and in some place (Environmentalist forums), prior to 2003 Johannesburg Summit, a new document was written "against sustainable development".

My personal idea is that playing with words is a rather sterile way to debate; the term 'development' should not be shameful, but its meaning should be analyzed in a very innovative way. The actual question does not lay in what we mean by 'development', but in what different people perceive through it. As a consequence, its meaning and its content are not univocal, universal, homogeneous in time and space, but they are related to people's expectation which change according to different economic situations and cultural identities.

However, it seems clear that anywhere, for anyone, and in anytime the term 'development' has had only positive connotations. As a matter of fact, its antonym is underdevelopment, as well as development delay, developing countries and so forth.

But, should we give only a positive connotation to the concept of development? And, as observes Gilbert Rist (1997), "why the facts that show the failure of the ideology of development do not seem to have any influence on its success?"

Probably the answer to this question lays in the observation suggested by Rist himself when he claims that "according to the example of what happens in the natural biological order, [the term development] is considered 'natural', positive, necessary, unquestionable."

Who reckons that these are the features of development?

The answer suggested by the most critical sectors is that this is the perspective of rich countries, which can show other peoples that development is the solution to all their problems. Although, the 'values' that the West lays at the heart of development "do not correspond to profound universal ambitions" and they often have a "very weak echo in other societies". Consequently, "these are the Western values that should be questioned in order to find a solution to today's problems and avoid the catastrophes that world economy is expecting" (Latouche, 2001).

According to this logic, all adjectives that have been used to describe development as self-centered, endogenous, participatory, community-centered, integrated, genuine, equal, or lasting, highlight the mystification that is implied in the concept of development.

The conclusion is that "the alternative cannot be expressed through a single model. The after-development must necessarily be plural. New ways for a common growth should be sought which do not favor a material wealth that destroys the environment and social relationships. The target of a 'good existence' can be declined according to contexts. This target can be called umran (bloom) as Ibn Kaldun did, swadeshi-sarvodaya (improvement of everyone's life conditions) as Gandhi did, or bamtaare (feeling well together) as Toucouleurs do. The key is expressing the rupture with that destruction enterprise that has been undertaken in the name of development and globalization. For the outcast, the shipwrecked people of development, it cannot be anything but a synthesis between a lost tradition and an inaccessible modernity. These original creations, which we can catch a glimpse of here and there in some initial thrill, will open the doors to the hope of an after-development" (Latouche, 2001).

We cannot disagree with this, but again, this seems an attempt to give a different name to a situation that could be simply called development if we did not be ashamed of this patronizing term as good and self-critical Westerners. Fair enough, if this will actually help solving the problems of those countries which I would not know how to call, and which I will simply name 'other'.

Prior to the annual seminar organized in Naples by 'Rete Meridione' (www.meridione.cittadellascienza.it), a sort of questionnaire was passed on the subject "acting locally for an inclusive development". One of the points of this questionnaire dealt with development; the questions of this section were:
- Are we sure we all perceive it in the same way?
- To some people this word means economic, social, cultural and civil growth.
- To others development is measured by monetary and quantitative parameters.
- Expressing and confronting different perceptions can help to make the debate more useful and clear, as today, discussions seem very confused and contaminated by an empty modernism.

The analysis of the answers to the questionnaire shows that:
1. Certainly, not everyone has the same perception of development, but all question the quantitative perception of development with different motivations and approaches.
2. To some, development means growth, especially a social, cultural and civil one.
3. To no one of the participants, development can be measured only by monetary and quantitative parameters.
4. A confrontation is necessary between the different perceptions and this can help understanding the debate.

In detail:

To Bruno Amoroso the concept of development reflects: "Western countries' need for self-legitimization and self-reward that is born from the frustration of a past marginality... So development is the form of growth that belongs to civilizations that have gone mad, which consider time and needs as obstacles, intolerable restraints". According to Amoroso, the main goal is "awaking communities and their people. Such awakening can produce the will to exist, live and grow together. So many questions are seeking an answer, so many needs to be fulfilled. Economies, markets and institutions must work for the same aim". Each community will choose a different way to grow, although "it will never be development", but "the evaluation of the fulfillment of one's own life". For this reason "the first rule is: never look around you, but inside yourself".

This must not be done in a rush. It should be an 'easy' approach: "the joy is living time in its slow pace. We shall build the economy of joy, not the economy of pain and sacrifice."

Paolo Coluccia, focuses on what he defines the "rhetoric of development".

To Coluccia, development has unsustainable costs, which become gigantic investment to build insuperable inequalities, realized by organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund "in collaboration with multinationals". Briefly, in Coluccia's view, the development that has involved approximately the years between 1945 and 1975 is, "a great patronizing enterprise", with uncontrolled and unopposed environmental catastrophes.

Trebeschi is the only one who recalls explicitly the idea of growth in association with the concept of development that he considers a "gradual transformation from lower 'situational levels' to higher levels". However, the author sees in welfare "the most significant level for a community" and he believes the income-based criteria in the estimate of development is 'reductionist', "because it neglects an entire non-apparent section of economy: informal and immaterial economy". Thus, to Trebeschi, "instead of considering economy as a condition to transform and improve social reality, we should consider the opposite perspective: starting from social quality to favor economic development." Almost all participants to the forum have made reference, more or less explicitly, to a 'social' concept of development.

In Francesco Domenico Moccia's view, the discriminating factor between quantitative and qualitative approach is "the involvement of values". Such an involvement does not occur when development is considered in quantitative terms, which simply underlines that more resources are available on the average, but they do not show how these are distributed and organized.

The point of view of Francesco Vigliarolo is close to the latter. Vigliarolo suggests a common denominator to the seven hypotheses put forward for the forum: the concept of "welfare social multiplier". Development in this context is the transformation from a situation to another, which is considered better than the first one. The standard feature in this process must be "a journey towards a shared aim, which is perceived as good and valid"; but this journey should be responsible, so that everyone is aware of pursuing a good and valid target".

Similarly, Fabrizio Manduca maintains that the "real development" is characterized by a progressive and coordinated growth of all individual economic, social, cultural and civil abilities. Operators' aim should be "a solid, irreversible, disinterested, unified, integrated, coordinated, shared and sustainable growth process of its economic, social, cultural and civil economy".
Also Liliana Baculo claims that the idea of economic development is based on transformation: on what "occurs in a less developed society, where resources are hidden, dispersed or badly exploited. The change is not referred only to tangible resources, but also (and especially) to cultural and ideal ones". There is not one single way to transformation, but different ways of development.

Quite directly, Maurizio Capelli makes reference to the difference between growth and development in order to define with the term 'development' "a dynamic approach to the growth of micro and macro economic indicators, which is influenced by variables of sustainability: culture, environment and democracy".

Mangone and Flora's contributions are more focused on territorialization of the concept of development.

Emiliiana Mangone believes that the issue of development evolves within a sustainable development that must be considered as a process that "tends to offer fundamental environmental, social and economic services to all community residences, with no danger for the asset of the environment and of the social system that controls services offer". This aim is composed of three goals "that must coexist": economic competitiveness, cohesion and social balance. The development strategy must be based on an integrated logic that should consistently grasp the three goals of territory sustainable development.

Finally, Achille Flora considers the concept of development as a "dynamic concept" that contains "the problem of wealth increase and resources exploitation", but it cannot be limited to this. In Flora's perspective populations should be able to "be both participants and decision makers with respect to the country's economic, social and civil plan, because as Amartya Sen states, 'development can be seen as an expansion process of the actual liberties that humans enjoy'".

3. Should we abolish the “Mezzogiorno”?

The discussion about whether it is still proper to talk about the questione meridionale [issues about Southern Italy] (or even 'Southern Italy' itself) has been going on for years. Economist Viesti has even published a book with a provocative title, Abolishing the Mezzogiorno.

The question about whether or not we should use the term questione meridionale seems rather unimportant as this does not affect in any way the problems of Southern regions that are (or have been) a 'question'.

The question about the term Mezzogiorno is less unimportant. Mezzogiorno is a geographical concept that has gradually acquired an economic connotation and it has become a synonym for slow development. With such a meaning, Mezzogiorno has a significance that changes in time; it refers to realities that change continuously. Hence, the actual issue is whether everyone gives this term the same meaning every time it is used; anyway, the key aspect is whether Southerners feel they are also and still Mezzogiorno given the economic significance of this term.

Which Mezzogiorno are we talking about? This term is used without considering the current situation that has changed since fifty years ago. The use of Mezzogiorno as a synonym for economic and social backwardness does not represent the same situation as 40-30 years ago, or a homogeneous reality.

In the past geographers would discuss whether Abruzzo was Mezzogiorno and whether Sardinia belonged to Mezzogiorno. This issue was definitively marginal compared to the fact that both regions were part of an area of poverty and underdevelopment that (in Italy as well as anywhere in the world) was a synonym for 'Mezzogiorno' or 'South', as opposed to advanced and developed 'North'. At that time, they decided that Mezzogiorno would be the area of intervention of Cassa per il Mezzogiorno [Funds for Southern Italy], which included Lower Lazio, Abruzzo and the province of Ascoli Piceno in Marche region, as continental Mezzogiorno, and Sicily and Sardinia as insular Mezzogiorno.

At the time of Carlo Levi's novel, Christ Stopped at Eboli, economic and social Mezzogiorno was very different. It was clear that there was a North and a South within South itself, and the boundary was at Eboli. Given the miserable situation of Mezzogiorno plagues it
seemed that Christ had just forgotten about the land that was South of Eboli. Today the situation has changed, economic and social geography has changed, what once was North has become South and vice versa.

Does Mezzogiorno still include the same areas? Certainly not, as many growth indicators show that especially central Italian areas have recovered namely Ascoli Piceno province, lower Lazio and Abruzzo. Mezzogiorno's area has been reduced and regions have been developing in different ways: as George Orwell would put it, all Mezzogiornoes are equal, but some Mezzogiornoes are more equals than others.

The 'hard core' of economic underdevelopment is represented by three regions: Campania, Calabria and Sicily. In fact, speaking of backwardness in general is not correct, unless it is referred essentially to unemployment. In that case, the hard core includes exactly these three regions, which correspond to the 'historical core' of organized crime. This observation was made more than twenty years ago by Censis (1981), but it represents a milestone in the attempt to find actual solutions to increase employment and for social and economic development.

However, not only did Mezzogiorno boundaries change, but also the perspectives of Mezzogiorno as an area of underdevelopment have changed. Today also new 'recipes' for the solution of problems in the South have been suggested: these involve also 'immaterial ingredients' rather than simply 'material' ones.

In particular, such new elements are represented by a resource that has been recently gaining ground, i.e. a whole series of arguments against modernity developed by several researchers, which can be simplistically condensed in the concept of “Southern identity”.

The main contribution to this new trend comes from philosopher Mario Alcaro, from Calabria, and sociologist Franco Cassano, from Bari, even if they take two different positions.

Mario Alcaro (1999) first of all put forward the hypothesis that some features of Southern Italy, as sociability and familism, could prove successful in the challenge of development and competitiveness.

Also Franco Cassano, the 'standard bearer' of pensiero meridiano (1996) [Southern thought] is an advocate of Southern identity as the protagonist of a civilization that does not need to pay any tribute to external contributions. In 2003 Cassano released for Laterza publishing company a book (Oltre il nulla): here he dedicates an essay to Giacomo Leopardi on the "problem of Southern eminence"; inspired by the poet's reflections in Zibaldone, Cassano underlines the "superiority" of Southern imagination as opposed to Northern imagination, "fed by solitude, silence and the monotony of life" (Leopardi).

As Titti Marrone summarized, "due to harmony with nature favored by a warm climate, antique civilizations were all meridian and the capitals of the past were Babylon, Memphis, Athens, Rome. Later, modernity has overturn relationships and icy North of efficiency and activism has stolen that antique supremacy" (15/02/03).

I recall writer Raffaele La Capria's L'Armonia Perduta and the lost "beautiful day" in Naples; I also recall what Pierre George (1968) wrote in a more scientific way about Mediterranean countries. The French geographer wondered why those countries, which were once the cradle of Western civilizations, "turned into a land of archaisms both in Europe (Spain, Southern Italy and Southern Balkan peninsula), on Asia Western coast, and in Maghreb?" George claimed that those countries could not "exploit natural environment in a modern way" and "live in the same environment in the same conditions as before".

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1 Raffaele La Capria wrote that there had been a 'beautiful day in Naples: "everyone would see it, paint it and reproduced it in luminous and transparent gouaches, The Vesuvius hanging above the sea, in the blue fresh air of the bay". Those gouaches represented "the visible Harmony between Nature and History, Nature and Culture, the Genius Loci and the Spirit of the World. It was a solar and Mediterranean harmony, close to the one that Greeks had met, or maybe something similar. In such Harmony everything held together, Gian Battista Vico and Pulcinella, Naples, Europe, 'the great ideas', the last popular song. No, that was not the Paradise on Earth, because there the people of misery lived: but the Harmony I describe is something different from social justice…".
So, turning back to Cassano and Leopardi, one possible solution would be recovering that "lost eminence", and such eminence would be represented by local environmental features and by social attitudes.

Listing Giacomo Leopardi among the forefathers of the researchers and thinkers of Southern Italy's problems is not totally inconvenient. It is just a way to use a contemporary terminology to define a remote way of thinking. Also historian Augusto Placanica (1998) had dedicated a volume to this aspect of Leopardi's thought. But, Cassano's actual aim was not the explanation of Leopardi's concern for the problems of Southern Italy; Cassano wanted to find further support to the significance of the pensiero meridiano. We could debate on the significance of this thought but it cannot be confused with meridionalismo, the actual concern for problems of Southern Italy. The pensiero meridiano is rather an approach for the identification of problems of Mezzogiorno and the "ingredients" that I mentioned above.

The debate is under discussion. In fact, it is a matter of discussions, not chatter, for heaven's sake! Discussions are needed to feed reflections and important cultural formulations that form part of a "Southern culture", or rather, a culture of Mezzogiorno.

Although, if the key question is whether (and why) Southern Italy is still a land of archaisms (George), if the problem is why in yearly quality life lists (they are debatable, but generally homogenous), Southern regions and provinces are always at the bottom of the list, we should understand if there is a recipe with new ingredients that are able to save Southern provinces from this situation of backwardness. A different, sustainable, self-centered, lasting and environmental-friendly development can be a solution; but such a development should be above all perceived by people, besides what growth indicators and quality life lists may say.

4. A recipe

If on one hand economical geography has changed, on the other hand physical geography is 'naturally' unaltered. In a way Southern Italy is still the same as 50 years ago: disrupted, earth-quaked and burning. Southern Italy can collapse for any earth quake, it can crumble or drawn at any long shower, it can be seriously damaged by Etna, Vesuvius or Campi Flegrei eruptions. Moreover, another hazard has added to natural ones: that is water, air and soil pollution. This worsens the quality of life and it shows that economical development does not always equal bad environmental conditions, or rather, it is not always true that underdevelopment involves undamaged environment quality.

Back in 1988 Giorgio Ruffolo wrote, "Mezzogiorno is characterized by insufficient development and environment deterioration that reaches a higher level than in the North".

The year after, Giuseppe De Rita commented the results of Giorgio Marbach’s coordinated research on wealth distribution over 8,092 Italian municipalities: "Mezzogiorno has much money and little development". What I mean is that Southern Italy consumes without producing, it is as "a tree without roots". But because you need an income in order to consume, according to De Rita such income and its increase could be "the result of illegal and criminal business" and that "such undercover gains push Southern life standards beyond the level of its official income".

Another paradox adds to what has just been mentioned: Mezzogiorno has little development, but a congested population density (especially on the coast and around great urban centers) and a serious environmental deterioration. Though, these cannot be considered as the toll for economical development; they are the result of a 'natural' inclination to deterioration that has been seriously affected by a disruptive human intervention.

This aspect was highlighted by the annual Report on Economy in Southern Italy released by Svimiez in 1989. The report showed that Mezzogiorno had serious environmental issues that were worse than those in the rest of the country.

This result would do justice to the belief that credited Southern Italy lower development and urbanization with undamaged and safer environment conditions. On the contrary, "Southern industrial system (…) based mainly on primary transformation sector (chemistry and metallurgy above all), due to the urban-coastal location of many large plants, causes greater environmental damages than those in the rest of the country".
These observations are only partially aged: the industrial system has only shifted its main activities as primary transformation plants have reduced their range (especially in the area around Naples) since Italsider and Q8 refinery have been closed down. However, dismantling these plants has brought other issues related to material disposal and the regeneration of the territory.

Svimez' observations are still valid because they question at least some of industrial policy choices in Southern Italy in terms of production industry and industrial settlements.

In addition to this, over one third of 'hazardous plants' are located in Southern Italy; the percentage is extremely high as Southern industrial system is definitively smaller than Northern one.

Environmental impact is seriously high.

Water, a key resource for social and economical development, is still a problem despite a 40 year long extraordinary intervention, both for quality and quantity. Waterworks waste 40-50% of transported water and about 40 basins used for potable water are atrophied.

It seems there is enough evidence to maintain that Mezzogiorno is still facing two emergencies: economy and environment.

Nevertheless, there is still room for hope and improvement.

If Mezzogiorno has much money and little development, and if Mezzogiorno has little development and great environmental deterioration, these observations confirm that deterioration can be stopped and recovered only through considerable interventions, investments and employment – this is the way to economic development and social promotion.

Mezzogiorno has not lived the industrial age, it has only experienced the worse economic aftermath of development, and it has jumped into the “post-industrial” age; but some room has been left, which could be exploited for production and employment.

To achieve this, there should be great honesty on what development means to everyone, and which development is a synonym for progress and social advance, and a guarantee for good environment quality. This means people should have the courage to state that non-compatible activities represent a dangerous development which does not produce wealth, or that the wealth it produces should be discounted of the environmental damage and of the costs of recovering it.

I do not think that if Mezzogiorno has not experienced the best aspects of the industrial age it will benefit completely from the post-industrial age. But I know that it is necessary to pinpoint which sectors could be developed in a 'environment-friendly' way. Moreover, all sectors of the so-called 'ecological industry', as environment regeneration, water and waste disposal, alternative and integrated energy resources development, have great chances for growth in Southern Italy.

If 'post-industrial' means 'service', this should be stressed and translated into the service of good environment quality and safe territory for citizens. National, regional and local governments should get ready for this, invest, pursue production and research activities, create development and employment.

5. The public sector

A common opinion is that after four decades of extraordinary interventions Mezzogiorno still needs infrastructures and public works, even though this need is different from 50 years ago.

The problem is that 'infrastructures' and 'public works' are not perceived in a univocal way, and they often underline problems that contradict and contrast the aims of growth and development that they were supposed to favor. So we need to be aware of what infrastructure and public works mean and what needs they can fulfil. Otherwise we will give the same relevance to a waterworks system, Salerno-Reggio Calabria motorway, or a bridge on the Strait of Messina.

Italian history of the last fifty years shows that 'public works' has always meant building roads, motorways, dikes, and so forth, with no concern for the actual benefit or for
environment impact. In other words, the estimates of public works costs and benefits usually give discouraging results.

As a consequence, nowadays people regard 'public works' with suspicion and worry. But the community needs works, which should be especially aimed at a safer exploitation of the environment and the territory; new works are needed to improve water distribution, waste disposal, and also to dismantle old 'public works' that have badly affected the environment and benefited privates and organized crime.

Also such 'deconstruction' works should be considered 'public': they would focus part of public works policy on the decrease rather than on the increase of the built environment.

But this is just one notable aspect of the question, one that can attempt to highlight a new trend in public works policy.

"Deconstruction" is a borderline case: it is rather a provocation, but it would not solve the entire problem. For example, the demolition of an unauthorized buildings does not put an end to the problem; it will be necessary to rebuild under a planning permission and recover the territory.

Therefore, deconstruction is only the beginning or only one single moment. The key moment is the actual reconstruction. What I mean by reconstruction is not merely building but acting in order to rebuild environment and territory's livability and safety.

This would give a productive connotation to costs for the environment, which so far have been used to 'repair' the environment, as financing patches on faults, to plugging a gap after a landslide, a flood or an earthquake. These are 'defensive costs' and they are mainly unproductive because they give on temporary solutions, they give work to a few companies, but they do not solve the upheaval at the root, they do not erase the risk.

Also recovering, protecting and preserving the natural environment from the risk of human intervention need attention and investments, the involvement of companies and employed people.

A research carried out by ENI-Isvet at the beginning of the 70s (long neglected and ignored) estimated costs and benefits of public works aimed at freeing the environment from pollution. Since then more that thirty years have passed, global situation has worsen but also some important steps have been taken. Today there is no point in making estimates on the basis of those calculations. But it is important to know the results of that study because they showed that the trend is unchanged: "there is an economical justification to the intervention of the community". The cost of the interventions to be realized over fifteen years was estimated about 9,000 billions, while the gain from the exclusion of pollution was estimated around 12,000 billions (in liras - 1970).

Some works instead do not imply either building or deconstruction, but preservation. That is the case of environment preservation, which requires the organization of natural parks and nature reserves. A modern approach to the protection of environment and wildlife can start an interesting economical engine.

In recent years, the overall area protected by the law in Italy has reached 7%, which is close to the legendary 10%. But is a law enough to protect nature and fight fires and unauthorized building, the real enemies of natural parks? Of course not, because parks are perceived as simply a series of bans, not as an opportunity for clean economical development.

However, this is just one way to approach the issue.

Stressing the importance of a clean environment and a safer territory for citizens' benefit does not imply that a policy for the development in Mezzogiorno should just focus on works for the environment. This means that there is a different and more productive concept that underlies public works, a new way to address the cooperation of companies and enterprises, which definitively need to be educated and orientated. Nevertheless, companies belong to a wide and varied universe: profit and benefit.

The key issue is what can be produced in Southern Italy, because an answer to this question would be useful to guide at least some of the works that I mentioned above.

The production of goods is one possible answer could be; but this is not 'the' answer.
Claiming that this is 'one possible answer' means acknowledging the phenomenon of economy dematerialization that has characterized developed countries over the last fifteen years. At the same time it means being particularly careful with the identification of the goods to be produced; apart from tangible goods also services can be produced that are aimed at improving the quality of life.

The last observation introduces another problem: that of the places in which we live and how we live there. The vast majority of people live in cities (especially in the first world, so in Italy and Southern Italy), generally in an uncomfortable and unpleasant situation. Gigantic enterprises are required to improve the quality of life in cities and to improve the distribution of infrastructures and services: transportation, waste disposal, education, culture, sport, leisure time…

This issue was tackled a few years ago during a UN conference on cities (Habitat, Istanbul, June 1996), which underlined the fact that not only are great cities or urban centers the epitome of social, environmental and urban problems, but they also represent great opportunities for investments in infrastructures and services. All great urban centers have usually grown without a reasonable planning of space, services and infrastructure, so they all need to be 'reorganized' in order to arrange the demand-supply ratio of services.

6. Bonds

Almost all the enterprises I have mentioned above go under the term 'public works', which not only are meant for the benefit of the community, but they are realized through public funds. Though, here the government does not participate as it used to in the past. The government gives the opportunity and the convenience of taking part through the law, which creates bonds and conveniences. For example, the regulations for waste production and disposal give convenient opportunities for business in the sector of separate waste collection and waste recycling. Some areas that have been identified as "high environment risk" (the province of Naples is the first on the list) give interesting perspectives to so-called 'green companies' that work in the sector of regeneration. Laws on anti-earthquake arrangements for high seismic risk areas, or regulations on works for disrupted areas on the Apennine would create good opportunities for the building industry.

It is the Government that triggers these opportunities. But once the national, regional or local government, or the EU have created a context for an intervention, the responsibility lays in the hands of private companies which have been awarded a contract.

As regards Mezzogiorno, at this stage at least two bonds come into play: credit and crime. Another powerful bond is ignorance, which is still strikingly strong in the approach to many problems in the Mezzogiorno. The key issue is the ability to wriggle out of these bonds.

On this point, I would like to remind that today many emphasize the role that could be played by tourism and by the 'soil' as a synonym for agriculture.

In my opinion this means taking a step backward and ignoring fifty years of policies for the Mezzogiorno. This confirms what Franco Cassano maintains about the need of giving back to Southern Italy the ancient dignity of "subject of thought".

When the Mezzogiorno has been thought by others, these thought it according to their interests, or ignoring Mezzogiorno's geographical, historical and cultural features. So the remarks I have just mentioned are the evidence of a widespread ignorance that obstacles the approach to problems in the South. In that case ignorance regards the territorial and environmental context in which agriculture and tourism should lead the economical development. But this means ignoring or underestimating the international political context in which this should happen.

The Mezzogiorno has an unimportant weight in Italian foreign policy; Southern agriculture policies have a smaller weight than the French, German or Padania ones.

I mean that agriculture and tourism are a whole and it is not possible to suggest these sectors as the only opportunities for development in the Mezzogiorno. Southern Italy is not only Capri, Ischia, Positano, Pantelleria and Cefalù, but also mountains and hills. The gap between stronger and weaker areas within Southern Italy could broaden; a discussion is
needed on the value of Southern mountains and on the possibility of integrating agriculture, tourism, parks and environment regeneration in the areas of the interior.

On a physically restored context we will be able to face new opportunities, to take the winning chance of agriculture and tourism, because in this way Southern lands can be ‘competitive’, and competition is a challenge that can be won through quality.

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