THE STATE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL:
PRACTICES OF PATRONAGE FOLLOWING THE 1980 ITALIAN EARTHQUAKE

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Abstract

This thesis is about the meaning of disaster, state and its intervention, and political patronage in the context of a local community in Italy. In November 1980 southern Italy was hit by a major earthquake; 90 seconds long, the event triggered social, economic, and political consequences that are present even today. The disaster prompted Rome to the approve of a law in 1981 (Law 219/81), analyzed in some detail in chapter five, which diverted vast amount of national capital to the region. Highlighting the historical context of the event and its institutional aftermath, this thesis focuses on relations between the state and the local community with particular reference to the modifications it created to previously existing patron-client relations in the political sphere. The temporal framework of my argument highlights how one village hit by the earthquake and its inhabitants shift between two pasts: the era that existed before the earthquake and the one that followed it, and their reflections in the local election campaign of April and May 2013.

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Chapter one. Introducing the field and the theoretical interests

The aim of this first chapter is to introduce the reader to the fieldwork, to the event that struck the studied community and the theoretical interests, link between the fieldwork and the broader framework in which the work can be placed. The reader will find three major topics in the theoretical section: first, the definition of the natural disaster as a historical event; second, the theories applied in order to study the concept of state and; finally, a description of the relation of patronage.

Caposele, "victim" of an earthquake

Caposele is a small (3,605 inhabitants) southern Italian village in the province of Avellino (Campania) that on November 23rd, 1980 was shaken by an earthquake for 90 seconds with a magnitude of 6.9 on the Richter Scale. The disaster significantly hit two Italian regions, Campania and Basilicata, killing 2,753 people, injuring 8,848 and making 400,000 homeless (Osservatorio Permanente sul Dopo Sisma, 2011). Three main provinces were strongly hit: in Campania, the provinces of Avellino (103 villages) and Salerno (66 villages); in Basilicata, the province of Potenza (45 villages). In 36 of the villages at the epicenter 20,000 apartments and buildings were destroyed. Caposele, the village that hosted the fieldwork that will analyzed subsequently, lost 62 inhabitants while 2,743 became homeless due to the destruction of 70% of the buildings (Osservatorio Permanente sul Dopo Sisma, 2011).

The event had a national impact and led to the implementation of Italian legislation through law no.219 passed in 1981 that recognized a new institution, the Italian Civic Protection Department and planned the local post-earthquake reconstruction and development. This last aspect will be analyzed in the ethnographic section. What is important here to note is that, among

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the several interesting aspects that these kinds of events offer to anthropologists' studies, for this particular work the perception of the state by the local community after the intervention and its effects on pre-existing clientelistic practices - due to the amount of money that the national government has locally allocated during the last 30 years - were chosen. Indeed, Caposele, together with the other villages belonging to the stricken area, received from the state € 32 billion (Osservatorio Permanente sul Dopo Sisma, 2011).

The choice of the village is the result of a challenge: to apply a personal new interest in the anthropological theories about the state, analyzed from different perspectives in different classes during my studies at the Central European University (post-colonialism, post-socialism and ethnicity) to previous research I carried out in the same village two years ago about the perception of trust among the community (Osservatorio Permanente sul Dopo Sisma 2011) .

The earthquake as a watershed

The natural disaster will be considered, in the course of this paper, as an event, a historical event as Sewell (1996) describes it. The author explains that the "term event is commonly used to signify an occurrence that is remarkable in some way, one that is widely noted and commented on by contemporaries" (841-842). He also adds that what makes an event historical are its effects on previous structures and practices by touching a chain of occurrences (843). This is exactly what happened in Caposele in 1980. The earthquake, at first, interrupted the linearity of the community's life, not only by breaking the daily routine but also giving them a new perception of *time* and *space*: the catastrophe marks a sort of "zero year" placing every happening before or after 1980. Moreover, the destruction and the reconstruction of the village has created a historical map that overlaps with the new geographical one where each place recalls a particular moment of their history: the historical center recalls the past, the pre-built houses remind of the time waiting

for the reconstruction and the new houses are the symbol of "the after" and of the new present time. Going into depth, the earthquake also changed the economic and social structure of the local society: the necessary reconstruction led to new job demands in manufacturing and surveying, to the detriment of the agricultural sector that saw a great reduction in the number of workers after 1981.

One last aspect that makes one define the event as historical is its echo at national level for three main reasons. First, the natural disaster had more than 2000 victims spread in two national regions and the destruction was so severe that it drew the attention not only of the national government and of the entire Italian population but also it involved foreign countries' solidarity. The second reason for the national impact is the economic governmental investment that brought about a political scandal, *Irpiniagate*, which emerged after a parliamentary enquiry into appropriate use of public money, the scandal meant that funds were no longer distributed and was the *raison d'être* of a new party, "Lega Nord", that was born on the wave of this scandal. The third reason is the use of the event as an important issue in public and political debates in order to compare those local communities and state reactions and outcomes with new state interventions as soon as other similar events occur (such as the 2009 earthquake in L'Aquila or the 2012 earthquake in Emilia Romagna).

Having established that the earthquake is an event, another important aspect for this research is the notion of turning point because, as Elder argues: "some events are important turning points in life – they redirect paths" (quoted in Abbott 2001:243). Since it would be impossible to explain and compare the production of state legitimacy or clientelistic practices before the earthquake, the study of local state perception will follow the path of "the after" starting from the idea that the state, through its economic intervention, has produced a certain legitimacy and redefined local practices. As mentioned before, it is unthinkable to compare state

legitimacy perceived by local people before the natural disaster but, the aspect that will be studied is the "narrative concept" (2001:245) by which the community refers to two points in time, that is the description of the present by referring to the past.

The state as a system of institutions

At the beginning of this research the first questions considered were: is the state an *a priori* concept? Where is the place the institution can be studied: the government level or the civil society level or both? "The anthropology of state" helped to provide an answer, in particular Timothy Mitchell's work (1991). He reminds the reader that the state is at the same time real and an illusion, a material force and an ideological construct, for this reason it is difficult to provide an exhaustive theory. Like Mitchell, Abrams (2006:124) states that, during the analysis, the researcher should separate the state-system from the state-idea where the first refers to institutionalized practices and the second is an "illusory account of practice". Among the Marxist, Gramscian and Foucauldian approaches, that will be briefly illustrated in the second chapter, it was decided that the last one was the most useful for the present research because it takes into account the important role played by the society. The idea of the state as a physical force in society (Mann:1984) and its dual dimension, central and local, informed the course of this research. Since the society studied has received a significant amount of public funds that moved from one level of bureaucracy to another, it was decided to embrace the approach suggested by Rose and Miller (1992) who, recalling Foucault, argue that what is important today is not the state domination of society but the *governmentalization*, that is the investigation of problematic of government, a combination of strategies, programs of intervention, that shape and, at the same time, satisfy local needs (1992:174-176). This approach gives the state a spatial dimension necessary for carrying out the present ethnographic research.

Foucault, with his concept of *governmentality,* and Weber, with his definition of modern state, are often cited as starting points. In a chapter of *State/space: a reader* (2003) a definition of state is given by Michael Mann based on the definition suggested by Weber. Mann argues that the concept of state is more than a social and political arena because of the territoriality of the institution and its centralization. The reader will see how the implementation of law 219/81, which contains the dichotomy centralization – decentralization, becomes crucial in the perception of the state at the local level. Defining the state Mann includes four main characteristics: "a *differentiated* set of institutions and personnel embodying *centrality* in the sense that political relations radiate outwards from a center to cover a *territorially* demarcated area, over which it exercises a monopoly of *authoritative binding rule-making*" (2003:53). The definition gives the idea of the trajectory that law 219/81 followed: from the center to the local territory, passing through different institutional levels, localizing the nodes of a network that will be recalled in the ethnographic section dealing with patronage. The concept of *spatialization* is presented by Ferguson and Gupta (2002) who identify two keys principles: verticality and encompassment. They argue that the state is situated in each scale from the local community up to the national government. The local community is encompassed by the regional institutions and these by the state system, and the state system by the international community. As a result, we have the idea of the state as an institution that contains and is above the civil society that tries to deal with government "top down" plans. Moreover, in a later publication, Sharma and Gupta explain that the way in which "people experience bureaucratic practices is shaped by representations of the state; in turn, how people read representations is mediated by their daily encounters with bureaucratic practices" (2006:19). As Dean (1999) reminds us, the notion of population is crucial to the definition of the goals of state government not only because happiness and prosperity is at stake but also because the bureaucratic state is controlled by the civil society, and with its

organizational capacity, enforces its decisions at the local level. Therefore, if we perceive state study as focused on the *governmentalization* of the institution through its apparatus, another key element of analysis is bureaucracy.

The concept of infrastructural power of Michael Mann (1984) offers significant insights. He argues that, especially in today's capitalist democracies, the state is able to penetrate the civil society implementing political programs throughout the territory (1984:115). As he writes, the state can impose a tax, interfere in our economic life, put restrictions on us and it is able to do this without our consent. This power does not derive from specific techniques that belong to the state but from societal improvement such as rapidity of communication or literacy. What is relevant in Mann's text is the explanation he gives to civil society's acceptance of state infrastructural power that relies on the necessity for the society of the state, its multitude of functions and territorialized centrality. With "necessity" the author refers to the need for the society to have some rules that assure personal safety or property; within the multifunctional activity he includes the guarantee of internal order, military defense, maintenance of infrastructures and economic redistribution; the territoriality of the state, according to Mann, is the most important power, making of the state a place by distributing national resources from the center government to the local. This is a key theoretical point for this work because the disaster, and the following state intervention at the local level, will show the expectations of the community in a moment in which their needs are particularly evident and the intervention strongly demanded. But, these necessities bring about two significant consequences. On the one hand, there is the possibility for the state to exploit its power in making its own interest, or the interest of group elites, through the ratification of laws, on the other, the territorial relations depend on state infrastructures and personnel that become necessary both for the state to enforce its power and for the society to satisfy its needs. In *Citizenship and the Legitimacy of Governance* (2011), Pardo introduces the problematic of

disconnection between government and civil society, between citizens' values, needs and expectations and the trust and quality of political interventions. He underlines the disconnection between state morality and community moralities explaining that the quality of law, bureaucracy and politics is central in the relation between locals and state system. The case of Caposele will show how these relations came to the surface in the aftermath due to some mechanisms of power implemented by the reconstruction law.

At the end of this theoretical research it was decided to make a distinction between the study of the state as a system or as an idea with the aim of understanding how the civil society encounters the institution. To analyze the answers of a community that received a significant governmental intervention could allow us to understand which is the connection, and its strength, between the state as an a priori concept and the state as a material force through the comparison between expectations and outcomes. Expectations, and maybe their betrayal, implicitly allude a certain idea of state. At the same time the injection of money through the economic intervention reshuffled the cards of an old practice, patronage. Studying local mechanism and relations between citizens and administration, looking at patronage, one can compare them to the wider interpretation of the phenomenon, showing how in this specific and peculiar case state intervention changed the pre-existing rules of the game.

Patronage[1]

Political clientelism is defined by René Lemarchand and Keith Legg as "a more or less personalized, affective, and reciprocal relationship between actors, or sets of actors, commanding unequal resources and involving mutually beneficial transactions that have political ramifications beyond the immediate sphere of dyadic relationships" (1972: 157-158).

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[1] The two terms, patronage and clientelism, will be used to refer to the same phenomenon.

Eisenstadt and Roninger (1984) define patrons-clients relations as a particularistic and diffuse informal practice characterized by the "package deal" exchange, on both part, of different types of resources: on the one hand instrumental, economic or political resources and, on the other, promise of reciprocity, loyalty and solidarity. Referring to the kind of exchange, Eric Wolf (1977:175) points out that it has a different tangibility and patrons and clients receive goods or services in different moments. Clients are the first to obtain and they need more time to give the favor back by promising their political support or by demonstrating their esteem. The established relation is based on a mutual consensus binding the patron and the client in a long-lasting relation that, however, can be abandoned voluntarily. Wolf adds that, following the definition of *dyadic contract* coined by Foster (1961), the client, other than promising his vote, also promises loyalty without turning to other patrons. Two other characteristics are the verticality of the relation and, therefore, the strong element of inequality between patron and client. The first occupies a position of power, able to handle resources, the reason why the second becomes dependent on the first. Speaking about resources, one of the crucial aspects of this research, according to the theories about patronage (Torsello 2007:204) the scarcity of resources, together with the inequality of status, is the reason for clientelism. This would explain why Boissevain in his work about patronage in Sicily describes the necessity of the practice as a need for protection and assistance that neither the State nor the family is able to provide (1966:30). The fear that the resources are not enough to satisfy everybody's needs creates the necessity of a patron-client relation in order to get access to them (Torsello 2007). But, what happens when the resources become abundant? Is clientelism no longer necessary?

Even if the reader will see in the next chapter that there are different approaches and definitions of the practice within the social sciences, for the present work Lemarchand's definition is used because it makes the characteristics of patronage clear, but utilizing a deeper

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analysis provided by Eisenstadt and Roninger's book published a decade later (1984:48). These characteristics will be at stake in the ethnographic part.

Chapter two. Literature review

The literature review will cover three major topics beginning with the anthropology of disaster and narrowing its scope to the anthropology of the state, patronage and local studies in Caposele and the region.

The Anthropology of disaster is the large framework in which the present work can be placed. Although disasters studies date back to the 1950's with the first socially oriented definition advanced by Charles Fritz[2] (quoted in Kreps 1984), Anthony Oliver Smith gives an important contribution to the field in the 1990's. With a long ethnographic research in a Peruvian village struck by an earthquake in 1970, he begins a deep study on the interactions between individuals, groups and cultural systems arguing that these connections influence social reaction to a disaster. The author, first in his article "Anthropological Research on Hazards and Disasters" (1996), and later in his book *The Angry Earth* (1999), offers three major perspectives for anthropological studies of disasters including a number of researches in the field. Recalling previous anthropological studies, he starts from the definition of a disaster as "a process/event involving a combination of potentially destructive agent(s) from the natural and/or technological environment and a population in a socially and technologically produced condition of environmental vulnerability" (1996:305). These elements, when combined, damage or produce a loss so that the community functions are temporarily interrupted or destroyed. By listing three perspectives of anthropological studies about disasters, he points out that the distinction is merely artificial since

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[2] Disasters are events that can be designated in time and space, which have impacts on social units. The social units, in turn, enact responses (or adjustments) to these impacts.

the holistic approach characterizes the discipline. The author distinguishes a behavioral (individual or organizational) response approach, a social change approach (that refers to the construction of cultural meanings after the loss) and, a political economic/environmental approach. The present research fits well in this last approach because this perspective looks at disasters as both opportunity and cause of a redefinition of local politics or at disasters as cause of alteration of state and citizens relations. As the author argues, disasters make individual actions, relations, aims and power clearer.

Writing about power and relations between state and citizens, as mentioned in the first chapter, the Anthropology of state becomes the second field of interest. The Foucauldian approach was chosen from among other ones. In the 1960s and a decade later, the definition of the state had two different Marxist influences. The first considered the State an instrument of capitalist class interests (Sharma and Gupta: 2006). State-centered theorists looked at the state as an institution that kept control over economic and political field and this monopoly gave rise to economic exploitation and political oppression. The second wave of Marxist theory conceived the state not only as a given entity but also as a complex social relation (*ibid*). More attention was given to the variability of state ability to pursue particular interests and to address its power to its social territories. In this period Gramsci focused on the concrete modalities used by the state to exercise its power; he not only looked at its institutions but also at the way in which these institutions were shaped by civil society. Foucault, rejecting the Marxist vision of the state, suggested a bottom-up approach (Jessop 2001). He conceived the nature of the institution not as something given but as a product of an exchange of practices; he also underlined the multiplicity of institutions within the state and he did not considered the state as a centralized sovereignty; finally, he intended the civil society as an active player in the state strategies of domination.

Davide Torsello (2009), in his excursus about the anthropological studies about the state, explains that the discipline has often considered the institution as a given political entity, avoiding in this way the problematization of its definition. According to the author, the interest of the discipline on the state is recent also because anthropology has studied non capitalistic societies for a long time. The result of this approach is, according to the author, a deep knowledge about the origins of the states, their typology, and the relation between states and inequality, discrimination and post and neo-colonialism; however the anthropological interest in some other aspects, such as the relation between state and civil society, the effects of globalization or capitalism on national states, are more recent.

Patronage, as a universal practice, has been differently and fully debated by anthropology. Clientelistic practices have been studied by anthropology since the 1960's, focusing on South America and the Mediterranean regions and, only from the 80's, anthropologists became interested in eastern European countries, Africa, and eastern and southern Asia (Torsello 2007). But, the concentration of the studies in these areas during the 60's contributed to the creation of a symbolic geography through the dichotomy between north and south areas such as north and south Italy, or north and south America. Moreover, the Mediterranean regions (including the northern African states) became a cultural area where patronage was stereotypically placed. For example, Gellner states that "Mediterranean societies clearly do have a patronage image" (1977:4) or honor and shame become values of Mediterranean societies for Peristiany (1966) while Eisenstadt and Roniger (1984) conceived their work grouping different world areas presenting for example the relation between patrons and clients in southern Europe, in the Muslim Middle East, in Latin America and patrons-clients relations in southeast Asia.

Looking at its definitions, patronage can be studied as a form of power, "an ethos where people know that it is *a* way of doing things among other" (Gellner 1977:3) or, according to

Boissevain who studied patronage in Sicily, clientelism can be seen as an institution based on reciprocal relations between patrons, who protect, through their influences and prestige in society, persons called clients that have to return favors to the first. According to a more recent work, Dorothy Zinn (2001), writing an ethnography about "the recommendation" in a southern village in Basilicata (Italy), studies patronage as a practice that can be referred to with a common daily language because it refers to the perception of reality.

Two other important works will be referred to, among others, that have been published about the earthquake in Basilicata and Campania: Ino Rossi's book "Community reconstruction after the earthquake" (1993), defined by Oliver Smith (1996:320) as "the only recent work in disaster research with an explicit theoretical goal" and Chairetakis' doctoral dissertation (1991) on development and reconstruction after the earthquake in the Sele Valley, including Caposele. Rossi, using both quantitative and qualitative data and relying on the role of "action" and "structure", tries to identify a framework by which is possible to predict the different speeds of community reconstruction after a disaster. Chairetakis, through her multi-year fieldwork offers a picture of six villages of the valley trying to understand how and why recovery processes are different from village to village dedicating the last part of her work to processes that reinforced political and economic interests of a particular Italian party, the Christian Democratic.

Remaining in the southern Italian area and with the aim of this work, the reader will not find an argumentation about the causes of patronage and also, it will not be argued whether or not patronage is a cultural phenomenon or an ideology; the goal of this paper is to show to what extent the rules of the *pre-existing*[3] practice changed after the state intervention.

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[3] The pre-existence of the clientelistic or patronage practices in southern Italy are widely documented by a vast literature. Most of the authors give particular prominence to the role of the Italian Christian Democratic party in the implementation of the practice (see Caciagli and Kawata in Kawata 2006, Chubb 1982, Graziano in Schmidt et al. 1977, Schneider and Schneider 2003).

Oliver Smith considers disasters as a "natural laboratory for anthropological theory" (1996:320), arguing for a necessary implementation of the limited theoretical work in the field. Relying on this statement the aim of this research is to add a new tile to this mosaic by trying to move a step further from the preceding works and combining the different anthropological fields.

Chapter three. Methodology

Since this work has a double perspective, to show both the local voice and the institutional understanding of the disaster, the methodology was twofold: One was the archival work, performed in the Parliamentary Archives in Rome and on the archive's website. The other was ethnographic fieldwork in the village of Caposele, using participant observation and semi-structure interviews. Both procedures were planned in advance and executed in April 2013.

The first step was to get in contact with the administrative office of the Historical Archive of the Chamber of Deputies in Rome. I was able to explain the aims of my work and address my questions always to the same employee who clearly suggested the best way to obtain the material I needed, firstly on line and after going in person to the archive. In fact, not only was I looking for the text of law number 219/81 but I was also interested in reading the stenographic reports of the parliamentary discourses that brought to the approval of law. Almost everything had been uploaded onto the online archive of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate of the Republic, but, when I arrived in Rome at the Library of the Chamber of Deputies which collects the printed version of the parliamentary acts, they gave me the possibility to get access to a unique PDF file containing all the necessary documents. Besides this, I had the chance to copy a fifty-page document of the Senate of the Republic was not included in the PDF document.

While in Budapest, I also planned the skeleton of the questions I was going to ask the field and I constructed them around three major topics: the path of the money (from the national

government to the local administration), the state "personification" and, the local knowledge of law no. 219/81. During the two weeks in Caposele I succeeded in making twelve arranged interviews from 45 minutes to 3 hours long, all carried out in a private office or in the interviewee's house. The interviewees belonged to different social classes, had different roles during the post-earthquake reconstruction (technicians, mayors, teachers, public officials or addressees of the law) and therefore different experiences and different political points of view. This last aspect becomes particularly important because the political campaign for the local administrative elections, started at the beginning of April, and was still ongoing during the fieldwork, had a strong impact on my data.

My research capitalized on a previous, smaller scale research I conducted in Caposele in 2011 as part of a post-graduate fellowship. Since then, I have kept in contact with villagers in Caposele. Going back to the field in 2013 and staying with the family who hosted me for a segment of my fieldwork in 2011 was therefore a natural move. Pietro and his wife Rosaria, high school professors, who I met towards the end of my stay in Caposele in 2011, became important nodes in my network. In April 2013 they offered their hospitality becoming a most valuable resource for me. Living with them and listening to their conversations, I was able to feel not only the tension around and the dynamics behind the local election campaign of spring 2013, but also to be present when people came to visit them, always bringing up the topic of the earthquake, politics and patronage. One particular fortunate event was the visit paid to them by one of the candidates for mayor who came to invite us to his first public meeting and to ask for Rosaria's intervention as an expert. I attended the meeting with them a week later.

A concluding remark of this methodology section is that going back to the field where the community already knows the researcher, his/her work and attitude to the research gives the

possibility to ask, sometimes, delicate questions that arise when speaking about topics such as patronage.

The following chapter will show both the structure and aims of law no.219/81 and the outcome of the informal conversations and interviews with local people.

Chapter five. Empirical findings

The findings of this research will be presented in two main parts. In the first part, in order to provide the context of the events, I describe the most important articles of law 219/81 for the reconstruction and development of the area hit by the earthquake, the actors involved and main topics proposed by the deputes during the approval. In the second part I will deal with the core of this research: the local community voices depicting the perception of the state and the rules of patronage referring to the local elections and to the post-earthquake.

Law 219/81 and parliamentary discourses

The Italian legislative power, according to article no.70 of the Italian Constitution, belongs to the Chambers of the Parliament: the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Republic. But, in cases of necessity and urgency, due to the long and complicated legislative procedure of the Chambers, the Government can adopt a temporary measure having force of law. The decree has to be approved and transposed into law by both Chambers within sixty days of its publication; otherwise it loses its effect (art. n. 77 of the Italian Constitution).

The documents collected in the Library of the Chamber of Deputies and in the Archives of both Chambers are the stenographic reports of the parliamentary debates for the approval of the decree no. 75 of March 19th 1981 proposing further state interventions in favor of the populations hit by the earthquakes in November 1980 and February 1981. The decree was

presented to the Senate on March 20th 1981 and the debates took place in May 5th and 6th in the Senate of the Republic. The approved text was then transmitted to the Chamber of Deputies on May 7th and discussed on the same day and on May 8th and 12th. The law was passed on May 14th 1981.

Out of 85 articles, the article no.2 of the law sets the scene of the intervention and, in a certain way, it summarizes its entire structure and the final goal. It expresses the national interest of the event, the actors involved in the procedures and the aims: the reconstruction and development but also the rebirth of the area hit by the earthquake are pursued by the State, the Regions, the Provinces, the local Commune and, the "Comunità Montane"[4].

The tragedy of the earthquake is seen, according to the parliamentary discourses, as an occasion not only to achieve the material and social reconstruction but also to promote development and rebirth, and to increase the value of local traditions. Interestingly, the deputies and senators during the debates refer to the area hit by the disaster it in a very broad way, by using terms such as *popolazioni meridionali* or *popolazioni del Mezzogiorno* (population of the South). The disaster becomes an opportunity for the populations to grow economically and for the state to compensate for its absence, and the late military intervention, during the first days of the emergency[5]. Particularly important is the reference to the *Questione Meridionale* (Southern question), the major national problem by which the economic and cultural difference between a rich and industrial North and a poor and agrarian South is defined[6]. The *Questione*, or problem,

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[4] The Comunità Montana in a public institution which gathers and seeks the interests of mountain areas.
[5] The absence of the state in the first days after the disaster is emblematically recalled through the title of one of the most representative newspapers at the national level but especially in the South, *Il Mattino*, that titles on November 26th, the first page "Fate presto!" (Hurry up!). On the same day the President of the Republic, Sandro Pertini, made a speech on Italian television denouncing the delay in relief operations and "serious shortcomings" in activity by the State.
[6]Two authors are frequently mentioned describing the North- South contrast: Banfield (1958) and Putman(1993). The first describes the southern underdevelopment as a consequence of an ethos, the amoral familism, the second

has accompanied Italy since its unification in 1861 and it is periodically recalled in the Parliament in order to justify economic interventions in the South. In the studied documents the southern question is described by the senators as a deep form of state aid that did not allow the southern communities to develop but prevented an autonomous growth of economic conditions always dependent on the funds lavished on them by the central government. For this reason a new kind of economic intervention is planned by law no. 219, presenting the state as a prompt supplier of resources and envisaging a strong autonomy for the regions, provinces, local administrations and, *comunità montane*. These institutions are the coordinators of the amount of money allocated by the national government. Although the intervention is declared as having national relevance, the responsibility of the redistribution and use of money remains at local level. Special power is given to the regions which are responsible for the allocation of money within their territory and mediators between the national government and the local administrations. Among those senators representatives of the Campania and Basilicata regions demanding local autonomy, a different voice stands out (Pietro Pistolese during the plenary sitting of May 5th 1981) warning that a strong regional power could feed practices of patronage, exacerbating the competition among communes that would try to rely on the most important political figures able to assure a higher amount of money.

To the intricate web of institutions involved in the redistribution and planning of resources the same intricate scene corresponds at the local level. Law 219 asks of the citizens a high level of autonomy and initiative during the reconstruction. According to the art. no. 14, the owner of the destroyed house, who decides to not delegate the local administration for the reconstruction, has to refer to a technician (architect or surveyor) who has to present all the

bases the difference on historical roots that brought about societies with a different level of social capital and, therefore, development.

necessary documents, including a project of reconstruction, to a commission, elected by the town council and composed of 4 members (at least 2 technicians) and presided over by the mayor. Once the commission approves the reconstruction the decision needs to be accepted by the mayor who authorizes the citizen to withdraw (art. no.15) the first amount of money necessary to start the reconstruction (25% of the total).

As we can see, new actors, new powers, and new dependencies, which create the possibility of manipulation in the pre-existing political hierarchy, come to the surface with the approval of the law and of the state intervention.

Local perception of the State

As I wrote in the first pages of this work, the idea of the present study came from a personal interest, a combination of new studies and previous research. I carried out two researches about the perception of trust, one in my hometown (a southern village in Puglia) in 2009 and the other in Caposele in 2010. Among the questions I asked, one required the survey participant to assign a numerical value - between 1(min) and 5(max) - to the perception of trust toward the state. The questionnaire was used to introduce myself and guide the conversation through certain topics; the analysis was therefore both quantitative and qualitative. Analyzing the data only from a numerical point of view, in my hometown the average level of trust was 2.83, in Caposele 1.8. Particularly insightful were the comments that came with the two different values: for the first village, the higher level of trust was a reward to the ideology of the institution, its aims and values (it is important to underline that the Italian state is a young institution established in 1861); for the village hit by the earthquake a sense of abandonment was prominent. What I am attempting to show by this example is that in these two cases the state is understood in the two different forms described by Mitchell (1999) and Abrams (2006): as an ideological construct and

a material force. The first can remain unchanged until an event, in this case a disaster, suspends it by creating needs that have to be satisfied through state functions.

Following the interviews and the stories people told me we should distinguish two chronological periods after the disaster: the "emergency" period (the first months) and the reconstruction period (years after). The most informative character who narrates the local needs and the first expectations of the population after November 23rd, with his deep voice and slow flow of memories, was the mayor in office in 1980:

> After the earthquake, we needed everything and we had to face our difficulties alone…
> Caposele had relied on itself for at least four days because nobody came!! Nobody!! We
> were isolated from the rest of the villages because the streets were old and unnavigable
> and the main street went around the village.. but the first who came was not the military
> force of the state but the volunteers from the neighboring regions and the German
> military force[7].

When the mayor was finally able to leave Caposele to look for help in the nearest bigger villages he was struck by the amount of the material help that arrived in the other cities effected by the quake and by the high presence of volunteers. He asked them to come to Caposele. At this point he stopped his story, and making sure that I got his point, he said: "Teresa, in those days the population of Caposele realized that they could have starved to death and nobody would have noticed it…".

The state is not physically perceived in the emergency period due to the absence of its military force, police and firemen but also, the awareness of their precarious material conditions that becomes clear to their eyes makes the sense of abandon stronger because it implies a more remote abandon. What is at stake is the guarantee of individual and social needs by the state (Mann 1984); this is the reason why a society accepts the institutional domination. The disaster shows the solitude and poverty of the South, a South without navigable streets and with houses made of stone where people ask where the state is.

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[7] Interview April 20th , 2013.

There are particular occasions, between the two periods that are being described, in which the state is personified in political figures. The first mentioned is the deputy Giuseppe Zamberletti; he is the *Commissario Straordinario* (Commissioner) nominated by the Government, coordinator of national administrations in case of urgency in order to implement particular parliamentary or governmental aims. During the first weeks of the post emergency (tail-end of the emergency), the commissioner, whose office was established geographically closer to the hit area, in Naples, had a strong power through his ministerial decrees having force of law. Zamberletti, for instance, visiting the villages, decided not only the number of tents, caravans and, later, pre-built houses per village but also their location. Therefore, when necessary, he availed himself of the right of eminent domain. Together with this physical presence, the visit of the leaders of two different national parties in Caposele to show their solidarity are recalled: Bettino Craxi (Socialist Party) and Enrico Berlinguer (Communist Party). But the political interest seems to vanish soon.

Michael Mann (1984) bases the definition of the state on two important characteristics: territoriality and centralization. These are the elements that compose his concept of infrastructural power by which he explains that the state penetrates the civil society by implementing political programs throughout its territory. This is what happened in Caposele but not in the expected way.

After a first moment of incredulity due to the aid that the state started giving to the population, as an elementary teacher I interview told me, things changed:

> After the total absence of the state during the first weeks [after the earthquake] we didn't expect to have our houses rebuilt and we didn't expect to rebuild them for free! The state financed the reconstruction [of the houses] totally. Of course, if you wanted a better house with more beautiful doors or flooring, as I did, you had to use your money but I know that there are people who didn't use one *lira* coming from their pocket…[8]

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[8] Interview April 14th, 2013.

At this point when the population was aware that the state was sending money to the local administration in order to finance the reconstruction the reactions were two-fold: a selfish or individualistic behavior showed through an endless desire of having more and more and a carelessness of the way in which the money was being used. The mayor in office from 1985 to 1990 explained to me:

> I remember that once I asked a citizen who presented a project for the reconstruction why he chose that particular foreign building contractor, and do you know what he said? He said that any building contractor would have rebuilt the house and that, after all, this was state money, not his own money therefore he didn't care how the money was used…[9]

This is the result of the kind of intervention that the state planned by law no. 219/81. The strong decentralization of responsibility, paradoxically, made the society irresponsible. It implemented self-management to the detriment of the social solidarity. The law, that this mayor called law of self-reconstruction because the citizen was the real addressee, distanced the state from the local community. The citizen found himself as an anonymous recipient of money and perceived the state as a cash machine. From the same interview, the ex-mayor continued:

> A legislator that writes such a law for a South already sick of poverty and malpractice is a state[10] that does not want to educate the citizen but which wants to get by on clientelistic practices softening it through beautiful words…

Everyone denounced the large amount of funds that the administration received and the waste that followed due to the impossibility of managing such a sum. During an informal conversation an inhabitant of Caposele described the state intervention in this way: "A state which gave us a lot of money but didn't give [us] what we really needed…". These last two statements refer to the implicit aim of politics to secure votes for the next elections, promoting immoral practices; to the

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[9] Interview April 20th, 2013.
[10] The interviewee implies that individual lawmaker is a manifestation of the state.

promised development that has never been accomplished[11] and, to the cut that the state has been planning in the last years to the local healthcare and judicial sector, by closing hospitals and courts in the near bigger villages.

Going back to the distinction of the two chronological periods, the community has found itself abandoned twice. Indeed, in the first emergency, the absence of the state was total and its presence was insistently demanded. In the second period the only presence of the state was its monetary contribution: during the years of the reconstruction the Italian state, that promised rebuilding and development, remained absent.

Among the consequences of this decentralized state intervention, of this flow of money, there is a practice that has been reinforced due to the new relation between the citizen and the local administration: patronage.

<center>The new characteristics of an old practice</center>

From the beginning of this work the clientelistic practices have been defined as pre-existent to the earthquake. Such pre-existing clientelistic practices existed not only in south of Italy, included Caposele, but also in the entire country. Zinn (2001), discovering a certain degree of *italianità*, an Italian character in the clientelism she studied, explicitly invites her colleagues to study the phenomenon in northern regions in order to compare the reasons which are behind the practice. As it has been mentioned, in the underdeveloped southern part of Italy, the Christian Democracy, the dominant national party from 1948 to 1992, became the instrument of clientelism (Caciagli 2006:162). The Party came to be one of the major distributors of resources nested in a vertical chain that started from the central, and higher, level in Rome and touched

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[11] Caposele, according to the latest census, has an unemployment rate of 17.95% and the rate is higher among the young: 51.72% (Osservatorio Permanente sul Dopo Sisma 2011). The problem of the unaccomplished development has been widely analyzed by the report published in 2011 by the Osservatorio Permanente sul Dopo Sisma, *La Fabbrica dl Terremoto*, the Earthquake Factory.

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every single level down to the local administration or the local office of the party. Some members of the party, at different levels, were strategic nodes of the network of the exchange of favors and collection of votes. At this point a clarification needs to be made. The patronage practice described in this work is not representative of the national and regional structure but it has its own internal rules and actors that develop after the approval and the accomplishment of law no. 219/81. This brief introduction will help the reader to place the relations in a broader perspective when the mechanisms related to the political figure of the mayor of Caposele will be recalled.

During the period this research was carried out, Caposele was in midst of its electoral campaign for the local administrative elections that were scheduled on May 26th and 27th. The incumbent mayor, a doctor, ran again against his ex- brother-in-law, also a doctor. The atmosphere was tense. Both candidates were, literally, looking for seven people who would belong to their list and administrate in case of victory. Rallies and calls made people busy and nervous. They would have liked to present the administration with a new image, proposing a new path for Caposele, involving the young symbol of growth and transparency. The two civic lists in fact were called "Caposele in my heart" and "Caposele in the future". Caposele is a small village, everyone knows everyone and the population "bet" on the presence of already known names that held the reins of the local power. This is the moment in which old grudges come to the surface going back to the use of public funds distributed through law no. 219/81. Due to this scenario it becomes easy to understand the trajectory and the themes that spring out from the interviews and conversations, a back and forth from past to present.

Regarding the clientelistic techniques, key terms and phrases during the conversations were "pre-existing", "old practice," "present also *before* the earthquake." But why then was it so crucial to go back to the reconstruction period? Because the funds that arrived, not only made the practice more evident to everyone's eyes but also changed the cards on the tables: as the amount

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of money available in the budget of the local administration was by far higher, the mayor acquires more power together with the class of technicians, the number of those complicitous increases and, the type of request changes together with the time needed to satisfy it.

"The mayor as controller of the money bag"

The clientelistic practices before the earthquake, according to one of the two successive mayors that I interviewed, was based on a limited amount of money: "There was very little to redistribute". The practices, at local level, included the offer of daily, or occasional jobs. Also, sometimes it was not even a matter of money but a request to turn a blind eye that allowed, for instance, a citizen to build his house on a territory where building was not authorized. On a higher level, in the vertical chain of relations, the requests were more significant: a permanent job or a promotion. With law no. 219/81 not only did the administration receive billions of lira but also, for the reasons already mentioned above, the mayor saw a larger amount of power conferred on himself[12]: if the citizen was the real addressee of the intervention, the mayor became the mediator of the economic transition and he had the last word on the approval of the reconstruction. The connection between citizen and mayor could also be supported or hindered by the figure of the technician[13]. The different outcome depended on the equality or inequality of political views of the parts. When the technician understood that his request could encounter difficulties in the commission usually he asked his client to visit the mayor in order to remind him that he had received his support during the elections. "For this reason I remember a procession of people in front of the door of my office"[14], said one of the ex-mayors.

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[12] This aspect is also confirmed by the study that Chairetakis carried out in the Sele Valley (1991, Chapter 9).
[13] The figure of the technician, symbol of the new and ambitious social class enriched with the reconstruction, is described in Chairetakis dissertation.
[14] Interview April 21st, 2013.

Political belief has always had an influence on the clientelistic practices and became stronger, according to the interviewees, during the redistribution of tents, caravans and pre-built houses, so strong that it was perceived as "normal", widely accepted. One of the two ex-mayors I interviewed remembered that when he was in the minority opposition party he met an old woman living in a caravan but who should have been given a prefabricated house due to her age. He remembered she did not complain because she was persuaded that since she had not voted for the mayor she did not have the right of having a pre-built house. A similar story was told by a woman who remembered her family running to occupy the caravans left by the German soldiers, who came as volunteers during the first emergency, for fear of not receiving one because of their different political sympathies. Therefore, the state intervention came to lie on a territory that had already a clientelistic foundation, the shape of which was transformed by the intervention.

To summarize the role of the mayor, he became a political and economic sentinel of the territory and mediator of consensus, playing on two levels: distributing material goods to the citizens and collecting local votes that would have been transferred on higher levels up to the deputes in Rome.

A loosely written law

According to the mayor in office from 1985 to 1990, law no. 219/81 was so full of gaps that the mayor could commit an illegality if he was reluctant about the redistribution. He also added that he perceived the law as an invitations for the citizens to take a chance and ask also for things and rights that were not their due. It is bad enough to think that an affidavit was sufficient, a sworn and signed written declaration, in order to state that the owned house was destroyed by the earthquake. The declaration did not require any other external depositions therefore it could happen that small and old houses in the countryside, sometimes demolished after the earthquake

or already in bad conditions before the disaster, were declared destroyed by the shake. Moreover, the mayor did not have the duty of confirming the statement and it could be said that he was immune from false statements. As a result, the number of reconstructions increased and more citizens had the possibility to enter in the mechanisms of exchanging promises and votes.

As already mentioned, technicians and lawyers were citizens' supporters because they acted as mediator between the citizen and the bureaucracy by interpreting the law and dealing with all the necessary documents. Being a fight against the time in order to be able to receive the funds within the deadline imposed by law, citizens and technicians seek each other out. And, if it was true that the technician asked the citizen intervention in case of different political views between mayor and surveyor, it was also true that the citizen entrusted the technician who was politically close to the administration assuring that his file would not be forgotten. Therefore there were new nodes in this web and new concrete requests that were satisfied in a short period of time: the citizen, relying on this system of exchange, received the promised amount of money as soon as the project was approved.

Patronage and the local elections in 2013

Before moving to the final considerations concerning the state intervention and its effects, recalling the theoretical interests with which this work began, it is necessary to write a few words about the present dynamics in Caposele. I have tried to describe the situation as precisely as possible about which past my interviewees were referring to, the past before or after the event. Caposele today, as the citizens say, is a village that belongs to "the system", to "the degenerate Italian political system". Moreover, the patronage practices I have studied here are present in the whole nation. Few would deny this. However, also in this sphere, the earthquake and everything that followed it, had an effect on the community.

As it has already been mentioned, although the campaign for the 2013 local elections has been based on words such as "freedom", "transparency", "equality" and "collectivity", the practice of exchanging votes for favors was still in use. According to the local people I have interviewed or with whom I had informal conversations, a citizen wants to be a candidate for mayor for one or more of three main reasons: for prestige among the local community and elsewhere (political aspirations), because the political position allows him to do things that he could not do being a simple citizen, and/or because he has already received a favor from a politician at a higher institutional level and he has to give back the favor by "promising" that his votes at the local level will be available to the next level. It was not by chance if, the villagers reported, both the candidates were doctors: this means that they can already guarantee a source of votes, that is, their patients. The patient would hardly deny his vote to his doctor because: "if I have a problem at night I'm sure he will come.. [because I gave him my vote]"[15].

Promises and favors are requested by both sides, citizens and candidates. During the campaign often members of the list of the candidate, or the candidate in person, knock on citizens' door in order to ask for their vote. If the promise of the candidate meets the one asked by the elector (the promise can be of different values, from a street into the countryside near his house to a temporary job for a relative) the first will receive the vote. But, if the promise is not honored in a short period of time, the candidate will not be supported next time and the favor will be asked of the other candidate. One example will help explain the mechanism. During an interview[16], a woman told me about the importance of the political beliefs of the ideology I mentioned above. Since her political sympathies were well known and were represented by the administration in office, I asserted that the new candidate would not have knocked on her door to

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[15] Informal conversation, April 16th 2013.
[16] Interview April 17th 2013.

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present his program and asked for her family's vote. She answered with a smile: "oh, they would be wrong!". She did not tell me the details but she let me infer her disappointment for a favor she had not received from the administration in office that she voted for five years ago. Her answers indicated that she had changed her mind based on broken promises.

During the interview I made with the incumbent mayor,[17] he told me that the figure of the mayor is particularly important today. Certain aspects are side-effects of the reconstruction period. He complained that people still believe that the mayor is "the one who can do everything because he has power and he could also act illegally, if necessary". But necessary for who? For the individual and not for the community. The requests are still related to the acquisition of a house and, if this is not possible, of some pre-built houses on the territory. Moreover, the requests often are presented presumptuously, as if it was a right.

At the end of the elections, the majority of the population decided to keep "Caposele in their heart" and not to propel the village "into the future" therefore the incumbent mayor, and his team, will administrate Caposele for the next five years. This is the picture of Caposele today, result of events and interventions. In the light of this it is possible to delineate some final considerations.

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[17] Interview April 18th 2013.

Final considerations

The initial interest of this work was the local perception of the state after a significant economic intervention. Wondering whether the state was perceived as an ideal concept or a concrete material force (Mitchell 1999, Abrams 2006) I understood that in this specific case, because of the intervention, both interpretations could be studied. The ideal concept comes out from peoples' expectations: feeling abandoned by the state means that the population had a particular idea of the institution made of solidarity and physical presence and interest in their fate. After this research I can conclude that the local population does not always perceive the state through its encounter with bureaucratic practices (Sharma and Gupta 2006). Rather, regional and local administrations belong to a political sphere which possesses a degree of autonomy, due to loose policy-making, which permitted them to act at times in such a way that no connection to the national government could be perceived. To paraphrase the words of an interviewee, the state is the distant and indifferent lawmaker. Therefore, through a comparison of expectations and outcomes, I conclude that law intervention can have the effect of disconnecting the civil society from the state (Pardo 2001). Indeed, seeing themselves as only recipients of money that for the first time in the Italian history went directly into citizens' pockets, the population was distanced from the state. We see a state that fails to reach its goals because it is a state that does not educate the citizens in the use of national money, the result of international loans, and Italians' tax money. We see a state that does not support its population, especially during the first emergency, and that does not implement economic programs.

Michael Mann (1984) explains that one risk of the distribution of national resources is the possibility for the state to exploit its power in pursuing its own interests. The decentralization of the intervention seems to delineate this scenario although an awareness of the risks of these legal

procedures was debated during the approval of law no. 219/81. Even if this work does not deal with practices of patronage outside the local community, the local community is conscious of them and sometimes has to deal with them. The political figure of the mayor, remembering the reasons for his candidacy and his role as mediator between the local community and the region or the state, is perceived as a symbol of these relations within a state that pumps money into the local arteries.

Another focus of this work has been the clientelism at local level as a result of the sudden and significant influx of money. Following theories about patronage (Torsello 2007) the scarcity of resources was a key characteristic of the practice. But, with this economic intervention the resources are more than abundant, so much so that the number of actors that can enter into this exchange of favors drastically increases. Therefore, the clientelistic practice does not disappear but, on the contrary, since the money flows into a community that already contained that practice, patronage changes some of its characteristics (Eisenstadt and Roninger 1977). Recalling the definition of clientelism given by Lemarchand (1972), at the local level, we still have a set of actors (mayor, technician and citizen) that command unequal resources according to their level of power but, it seems clear from the description given of the exchanges that three particular characteristics change: loyalty, long-lasting relation, and request.

I discuss the importance of political beliefs in the community and I believe that this, together with the awareness of the lack of resources, allowed the client to be patient and trust the patron even in the long term, waiting for the realization of the promise. But when the state intervenes, the citizen knows that the patron, in this case the mayor, has the availability of the resources and therefore the exchange not only has to be made in a short period of time but also, the citizen tends to be more pragmatic and cares less about his political belief, reaching the person who satisfies his need the soonest. This is a feature that was noticed both in the patron-

client relation after the earthquake and today, during the local elections. Therefore loyalty and long last relations (Wolf 1977) seem to weaken and the requests, based on practical needs such as houses or the abstention from the payment of taxes, are presented persistently as a right of an earthquake victim.

This work is a result of a short time of investigation on a topic so delicate and complex that it requires longer and more in-depth fieldwork, however I believe that the strength of this thesis relies on the attempt to implement two fields of the anthropology that, according to the literature (Torsello 2009 and Oliver-Smith 1996), are still understudied. I also believe that combining these two topics, state and disaster, provides insights on both sides: studying the perception of the state after a disaster makes more clear beliefs and expectations but also it helps to understand which of the duties and rights are on both sides, citizens and state. The study becomes more interesting if conducted through a two-fold approach, top-down and bottom-up, because the relations between state and citizens are more evident as well as the comparison between the aims of the interventions and the local effects. As far as patronage is concerned, if we argue that it is a universal practice (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984, Torsello 2007, Zinn 2001), this local study could be employed in a broader comparison but, I also believe that this work could be a starting point for further investigation that focuses on the definition of the practice. Indeed, I wonder whether we can still define patronage as a practice if it becomes so ubiquitous within the village that it puts into question its fundamental characteristics.

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