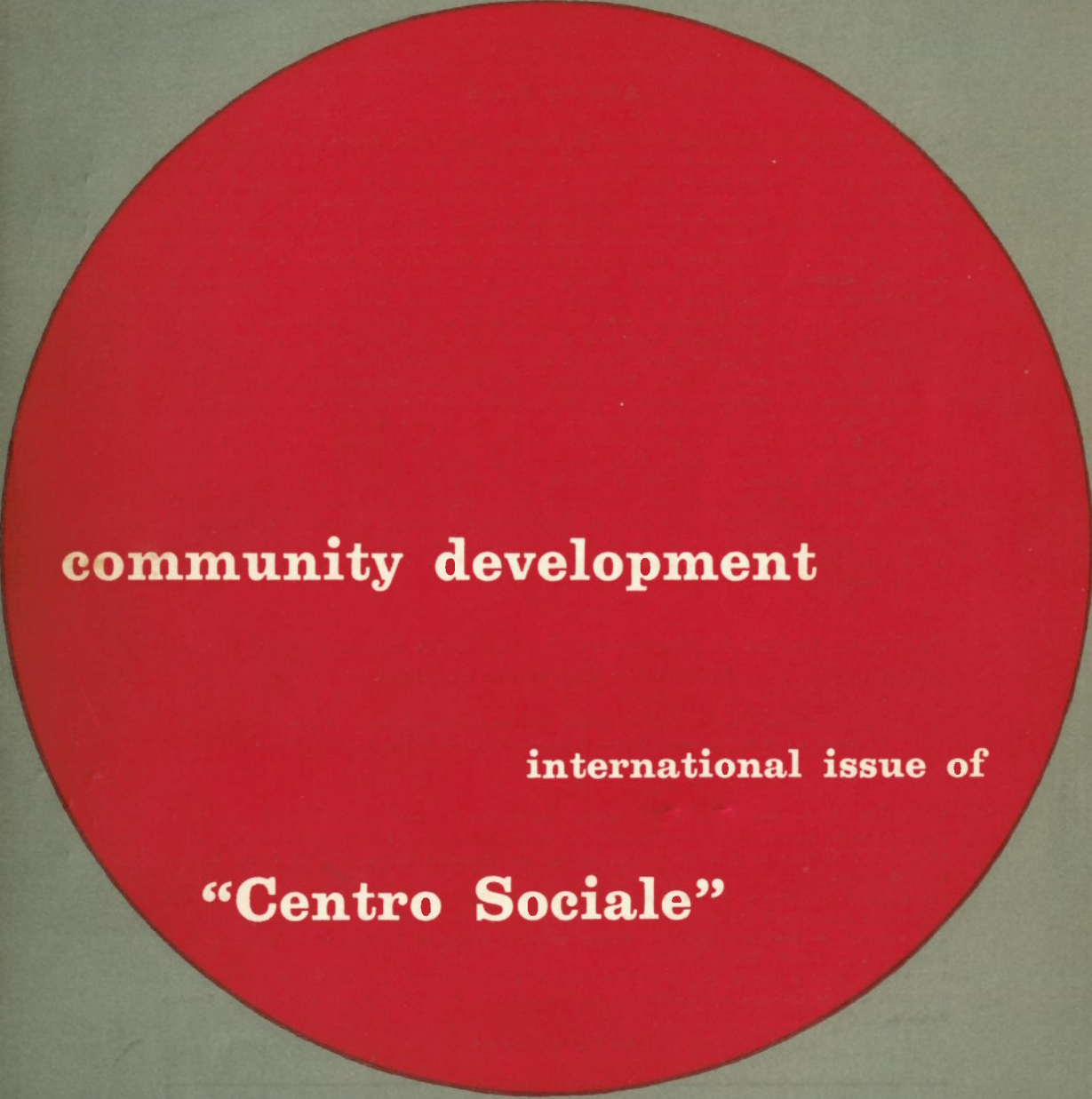


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A Comparative Study on Some Italian Community Development Projects

by Giovanni Mottura

1. Foreword

In another part of this volume we present some short descriptive summaries of each of the community development projects discussed at the Sorrento Conference.

It will be obvious to the reader that they are inadequate for the purpose of a thorough analysis both of the specific characteristics differentiating the various projects, and of those elements that enable us to consider the projects as a whole, as parts of a single and larger theme. It is only in the attempt to identify such a theme that we can justify the bringing together of experiences that apparently have, historically and ideologically, such different origins and such different aims, methods and results.

We feel however that before even starting such an attempt, we must clarify a few points. First of all, any comparative analysis consists essentially of the effort of discovering and building through the examination of a given set of phenomena, that supposedly have some features in common, a general pattern which should enable the observer (and any interested person) to better interpret not only that given set, but also any other phenomenon of the same order that may be added to the same set in future. Hence derive at least three consequences, that will define the aims and the limitations of this paper:

- (a) the pattern that we have evolved is simply a network of the themes that we could extract from the available documentary material because we considered them particularly indicative, and therefore is not exhaustive of *all* the phenomena contained in the universe examined. From our point of view it is enough that it should not exclude other possible additions or integrations.
- (b) The consideration of this pattern may induce us in some cases to state general propositions, that would not be entirely justified on the sole basis of the material examined. This is not due only to possible mistakes of the author, but also to the fact that the universe considered does not contain the set of all possible community projects, but rather consists of a small number of projects that actually took place in Italy.

In writing this study the A. was helped by a group of consultants: Dr. SALVATORE CAFIERO (SVIMEZ), Dr. EMMA MORIN (Community Development Consultant) and Dr. ANGELA ZUCCONI (CEPAS - Olivetti Foundation).

The validity of the general pattern is in fact in direct proportion to its possibility of being helpfully used in interpreting phenomena of the same class.

- (c) From the above, it will be clear that this paper has a *practical* aim which is in effect the same aim of the Sorrento Conference: through the analysis of past experiences in the field of community development, and in view of the new development trends appearing today in Italian society, we want to assess whether and to what extent the hypothesis of carrying over into the future the debate of the problems connected with such experiences can be considered as realistic, and whether — if such a proposition is worth considering — it should be deemed a development, a negation or a progress in respect of what has been done in the past.

Of course, in order to be complete, our analysis ought to include also a consideration of the pertinent social, economic and political phenomena that have taken place in the last ten years in Italy, but this would lead us to try and cover a field far too broad for this paper. In order to obviate in part to this deficiency, we have tried to present directly in the text at least some brief considerations on the most important points: otherwise we can only ask the reader to compare Professor Marselli's paper, published elsewhere in this volume, on the historical background of the projects with his own knowledge of present time situations.

It would of course be much easier if all the projects considered were by now finished with — though if one considers the circumstances owing to which some projects were ended it would be more appropriate to speak of an interruption, rather than of an end of the work due to having reached some of its aims. Things, however, are otherwise and some of the projects are still alive: CECAT in Castelfranco, Dolci in Sicily, Shell in Borgo a Mozzano, etc.

The problem then is whether or not it is valid to consider the three years period 1964-66 as the conclusive limit of a same experimental phase, so that in order to go beyond it, it has been and it would be necessary to face critically some of their problems and their contradictions both of an internal and an external origin.

We consider the choice of this period as a working hypothesis, to be tested in the pages to follow, but we base it on two orders of factors, which we can summarize briefly here:¹

(a) *Exogenous Factors*

At a socio-economic level those years witnessed the change processes — which have looked almost like qualitative leaps — connected with the deep transformations that have taken place both in the relationship between production

sectors (particularly in the relationship between agriculture on the one side and industry and the tertiary sector on the other) and within each sector; as a consequence during those years there were noticeable variations in the income distribution, its destination, in vertical and horizontal mobility etc.

At a political level the social and economic events, and the perceptible alteration of Italy's standing in international affairs, have determined an equally perceptible transformation both in governmental attitudes and actions and in those of the opposition. We may quote for the former the centre -of-left coalition, the beginning of economic planning, the establishment of regions, the attempt to modernize and rejuvenate the old and heavy bureaucratic apparatus, as well as some of the institutions necessary to the functioning of the whole system, like the school, etc; and for the latter, the breaking up of the old left front with the socialists taking part in government; an increase in the attitude of "democratic opposition" on the part of the communist party; the birth, left of the communist party, of several more radical groups, calling in question the communist party's role of political and theoretical leadership. And to keep more to our subject, we must note that these events seem to have had some influence on the increasing acceptance shown both by government and by opposition, though with different motivations and rhythms, of methodology and techniques characteristic of social work. The existence of this trend leads us to think that the influence of the changes we mentioned before on the attitude towards social operators was not only indirect (as a modification of the environment in which as technicians they operated, or as citizens they lived) but also a direct one, insofar as it produced a demand for them, and opportunities which, though not yet completely explored, seem to indicate that some doors are now opening in what a few years back looked just a blank wall.

(b) *Endogenous Factors*

The pages that follow will deal mostly with these factors. It seems however legitimate to state even at this stage, that though one of the greatest deficiencies of the projects, and in general of all types of social work in Italy, has been the lack of communication and of exchange of experiences (or in other words the insufficient awareness or wish to represent different moments of a single experimental process) still the intervention work itself made it progressively necessary to think over and revise a large number of concepts, assumptions and methods of action. This need gained ground from the bottom towards the top, or it would be better to say from the periphery to the centre (often through partial and/or personal, and often acute crises amongst the operators themselves), and has at last become quite general. This process developed concomitantly with the transformations occurring in a larger social field, until it reached the most responsive sectors of the agencies that had initiated the programs:

the sectors, that is, where the directive and coordination functions were carried out concomitantly with an effort towards a more precise elaboration and control over the theoretical instruments and the cultural domaine of the discipline.

The result of this effort, in simple terms, was that with increasing frequency the question "What are we doing?" came up as a necessary basis to the next question. "What shall we do in the future?". The very fact that the two questions were asked, and were given serious consideration, seems to us a valid justification for our choice of the years 1964-66 — the years during which they appeared most frequently — as the turning point in the history of the whole operational sector. After those years the projects still in existence — even if born a long time ago — will be able to continue to exist (that is to be valid) only to the extent in which they will be different from what they were. What this difference should be, is far from clear at present: the pages which follow are meant as a small contribution towards making it clearer.

2. The Projects and Society

In order to make a start toward the classification of the different projects in groups as homogeneous as possible, we can begin by trying to assess their attitude towards the larger society, both from the point of view of a value judgement (which may have been relevant to the preparation and the development of interventions), and of the choice of conceptual frameworks that no doubt have an influence on the choice of instruments.

We must state at once that not all the projects — according to the material available for our analysis — did start from explicit judgements on the Italian society in which they were and/or are operating. We are therefore assuming that such evaluations can always be traced, even if in some cases they have had to be made explicit and these conclusions are open to criticism and may appear arbitrary to some.

2.1. Implicit and Explicit Evaluation of Society

The first distinction we find useful is, then, between projects where this evaluation of society had been *explicitly* formulated, and those in which such an evaluation remained *implicit*:

- A. Explicit evaluation: Molise project; Pilot-project in the Abruzzi; Comunità in the Canavese area; Centre of Studies and Initiatives for Full Employment in Partinico; CECAT (Centre for Education and Cooperation in Agriculture in the Treviso province) in Castelfranco Veneto; Avigliano project.
- B. Implicit evaluation: Shell project in Borgo a Mozzano; OECE project in Sardinia; Centre for Community Development in Palma di Montechiaro.²

Some of the possible meanings of this distinction can be better clarified, if one tries to stress the different "angle" typical of these evaluations. In general, if we keep in mind the initial orientation characteristic of each of them, we can group the projects in three groups, which appear to us to clearly indicate three different outlooks, culturally, rather than technically. We feel that they might correspond to three different paths community development work may take. Maintaining the previous distinction, we can observe that:

- A. The *explicit* evaluations can be subdivided — according to the initial characteristics — in two subgroups:
 - A.1. mainly *historico-political* (Molise, Comunità, Partinico)
 - A.2. mainly *technico-political* (Abruzzi, CECAT, Avigliano)
- B. The *implicit* evaluations, however, appear to be all contained in the one group:
 - B.1. mainly *centered on technical assistance* (Borgo a Mozzano, Sardinia, Palma di Montechiaro).

The terms we have used to tipify the three different outlooks may not appear altogether clear or exhaustive. In fact, we will be able to justify this choice of terms later, when we will try to show the possible connexions between membership of one of the groups and the further choices of a technical or methodological nature made in each project. In any case, we derived the terms directly from the documents produced by the projects themselves.

We should explain here that when we use the term *political*, we do not mean it in connexion with any political party; on the contrary, we use it in the same sense in which it often appears in the documents of the three projects of group A.1. (Molise, Comunità, Partinico). There it is used often to express the dissatisfaction with the traditionally accepted mode of action of political parties, who are often charged with neglecting the issue of "attitudes' change", and with taking for granted a one way causal relationship between economic development and socio-cultural evolution. The political parties' attitudes, according to some of the projects spokesmen, would produce on the one hand the effect of preventing the population of whole areas from participating to the general development, and on the other hand of not involving in this participation even the populations of more developed areas, so that even the latter cannot fully benefit from it.

It is in this sense that for instance the spokesmen of the Molise project said: "(there is)... a lack of civilized life... and of a reasonable degree of communication, selection and organization on the part of the system on the one side, and a defect, a deficiency in ideology and in custom on the other", and Danilo Dolci echoed "The usual information and pressure channels existing in a civilized State, here are altogether useless", and Comunità. "... What is

needed is a deep-going work of education and preparation to political and civic life".

On the other hand, the distinguishing feature of the so called "political" evaluations from others, fairly similar in their formulation (see e.g. some of programmatic documents of the Palma di Montechiaro project) is the fact that in the former the aim of developing autonomously, in the first person, an activity of stimulation and organization of the local participation, and eventually of dissension, is made quite explicit.

The institutional structures are considered in general as tools and functions which are useful and necessary, to be mobilized and interested, even if they have to be reformed, through the action and the direct initiative of the people.

Even Danilo Dolci, who appears the most "revolutionary" of the operators, writes, while planning his attempted "strike in reverse" (1955): "We ask the authorities to cooperate with us, suggesting to us where we should start from, and how: otherwise with the help of technicians, we will begin from the most urgent work".

On the contrary, in the assessments (quite similar in other respects) of Palma di Montechiaro, there is no direct action implied — which in the above meaning would have been defined *political* — on the part of the project's sponsors. In this way the work is defined mostly by a consultative function either open to all, or — (as in the case of Borgo a Mozzano) open to a definite group of citizens, e.g. the small land owners. This work becomes then the work of an institution, though of a new type, in the local context, and this is the characteristic which think of when we define the action as "*technical assistance*".

We do not want to place the two words *historical* and *technical* in contraposition; we mean simply to emphasize a particular sensitiveness to an aspect of the problems involved: we might say roughly that the term *historical* tends to imply a *prevailing* interest of the operators towards the socio-historical dimensions of the problems they had to face, while *technical* refers to the great interest shown by some of the projects for the methodological aspects, and for their effects in the field of interventions, in the more general sense, i.e. on society as a whole.

2.2. Relationship between General Social Problems and Specific Situation

We can now complete the examination of the different attitudes found in the projects towards society at large, by grouping the projects according to another criterion: the relationship between *general social problems* and *the specific situation faced by the project*, as defined by the sponsors. The following classification might be an example of it:

- A. *Generalized approach*: a community development work in a given area derives its validity mainly from the *general analysis* (of society at large) that inspired it, and from the possibility

of extracting from its results practical contents for the civic commitment which is at its basis. We can classify in this way (confirming what we stated above) the Molise, Comunità and Partinico projects, that is the first three projects which we described before as *historico-political*.

- B. *Focalized approach*: a general assessment — implicit or explicit — passed on society at large has a value only insofar as it lends itself to be broken down into a series of indications concerning sectorial problems, which can be faced in separate and specific ways (for instance the problem of productivity in *Sardinia*, or of the diffusion of agricultural innovations in *Borgo a Mozzano*). The work of local intervention therefore presents itself as an effort to find a correct way of solving one, or a set of problems individuated in this way, to the extent in which they appear to be *connected* with each other, and indeed capable of a *solution at the local level*.
- C. *Intermediate approach*: to this group belong the three projects (Abruzzi, CECAT, Avigliano) that we had defined as “technical-political.” Our definition of the term “technical” is now perhaps clearer, in the sense that the specific interest for methodological problems, though it contains on the one hand an element of “generalized approach,” on the other hand it stresses the importance of a concrete experimentation with methods and techniques, which in the last resort can only be verified at a local level.³

We meet here with an exception, the *Palma di Montechiaro project*, which under this particular profile should belong to the “intermediate” group, and therefore is the only case in which the previous classification does not correspond with this one. This is due to the fact that the criterion used here stresses particularly just that “generalized approach” we had mentioned before about this particular project, which in the light of the previous criterion could be classified as “parapolitical”. We observe that in any case this project is different from Abruzzi, CECAT and Avigliano, where the experimentation with techniques and methods is concerned, insofar as the main purpose of action is not the development encouraged through direct interventions in the population, but rather the reorganization of the community institutions through a consultative service.

2.3. Reformism of the Projects, Participation and Power

From the analysis of this first theme it is in any case possible to come to a conclusion common to all the projects: and it is important, in our opinion to stress it, both because it defines better the ground we are covering, and because it gives some objective limits to these experiences, which have sometimes been interpreted “a posteriori” with a certain amount of confusion as to their real

nature, owing possibly to the subjective feelings evoked by the participation in them.⁴

The general orientation of the judgements passed on society at large — and also of the aims deriving from them — is reformist. To make clear the meaning of this word, we can say that it is equivalent to state that the criticism of the existing social structures in those assessments is the point of departure for a search of specific corrective mechanisms, realistically applicable within the given social situation and within the given power structure.

This is perfectly clear in some of the projects that are explicitly oriented in this way like Borgo a Mozzano, Sardinia, Avigliano, Palma di Montechiaro and even Comunità; it is not as clear for others, as Molise, and especially Partinico, in whose programmatic documents it is easy to meet explicit enunciations of the need to spread a "revolutionary tension".

On the other hand there can be no doubt that as community development work was taking place in some of the poorer areas of the country, and brought the operators in a far from superficial contact with people suffering from terrible problems of survival, this very fact contributed a great deal — especially where the direct contact workers were concerned — to establish a number of personal and group evaluations and assessments which went far beyond the limits and the institutional aims of the projects. It would be very interesting to study — in the light of the conflicts and personal crises that quite often were the result of this gap — the dynamics of the evolution happening within the particular roles of social operators involved in them, and the developments in this social work area that originated from all this. But this would be rather outside our main field of interest, though we will come again to this subject later.

In this section we would rather stress an element which may be at the root of what we called *reformism*; and which may clarify in part our previous statement.

If, on the basis of the documentary evidence available, we want to inquire on the approach taken by the different projects to the practical and theoretical issue of *power*, in the sense of decision-making power at the general socio-economic level, we will discover three very interesting facts.

- (a) the issue, as far as the projects are concerned, is never directly mentioned;
- (b) the indirect formulations, or the relevant observations that can be found on this subject never concern the national level, but only the local, or — more infrequently — the effects that can be felt at the local level from specific phenomena of a larger range;
- (c) as a consequence of this type of orientation, the specific form assumed by the issue of power in our case is the work hypothesis of *participation*.

The term "work hypothesis" may look too restrictive for a theme such as participation, which in many texts has almost become an *ideology*. However, — provided one is not restricting the use of this term to the concrete intervention work, but rather to the theoretical consideration of the various aspects of intervention work, which certainly was not lacking in the projects — we feel that the use of "working hypothesis" appropriately underlines the remarkable gap still existing between the ideologies and the concrete experiences. If this gap on the one hand shows us that the experiments so far have been unable to solve the many difficulties of systematically settling this question, on the other hand it certainly proves that the workers involved in the projects were truly committed and seriously aware of it.

However, all the projects underline the concept of *participation*, and the *power* appears as a function of some elements, whose increase in the people living in the areas concerned becomes one of the main aims of the projects. The most important of these elements appear to be the following:

- (A) Education and/or occupational qualification.
- (B) Knowledge and/or awareness of the collective dimension of own problems at the community level.
- (C) Knowledge of legislation and of the bureaucratic channels to use in case of need.
- (D) Capacity to develop organized collective pressure in order to reach given objectives concerning the community.
- (E) Capacity to undertake on one's own improvement activities, more or less institutionalized, in the community.

Each project accepts one or more of these elements, in various ways; we may say, roughly, that B. and E. contain ideas that are present more or less in all projects, while the elements which characterize more sharply individual projects (even if the ideological, methodological and technical contents differ in different cases) are the following: ⁵

Table 1. Objectives Stressed in Order to Increase Participation

	A	B	C	D	E
1. Abruzzi	3	2			1
2. Avigliano	3	1			2
3. Borgo a M.		3	2		1
4. CECAT	2	3			1
5. Comunità	2	1			3
6. Molise	1	3			2
7. Palma di M.	1	2			3
8. Partinico		3		1	2
9. Sardinia		3	2		1

(The numbers appearing in the different columns indicate roughly the priority order given to each element in each project).

2.4. Use of the Term "Community"

The most interesting aspect of this list is that it does show the close connexion between the problem of *power-participation* and the issue concerning the relationship between *local community-society at large*, and the definition itself of the term *community*.

If we consider the above list as a definition of the content attributed to each element, and therefore as a definition of the tasks workers had to perform, we can come to the conclusion that *society*, whatever definition may be given elsewhere, is always thought of in one of the following ways:

- A. *As an aggregate of territorial units or communities*, each of which reflects — both in the relationships developing within it as well as in those with other communities — the essential problems of society at large.
- B. *As an institutional-juridical system* which regulates the internal and mutual relationships of the territorial communities which together form the nation.

Practically of course, these two conceptions are often superimposed rather than in contraposition. But the fact of making use of one conception rather than the other seems to have some significance, though we will leave the reader to look for a more accurate correspondence with the previous classifications.

Generally speaking, we can see that the choice of alternative A. is more usually taken by those projects that tend to give emphasis to the collective dimension; i.e. the projects whose action tends from the very beginning to involve the community as a whole, and if — for obvious practical reasons — their internal structure consists of intervention sectors, the emphasis is then placed strongly on the need for integration between the different sectors.

On the contrary, alternative B. is chosen by those projects which are born from the need of a specific sectorial intervention, and in which there is a tendency to consider the strictly socio-cultural aspects of the community situation as functions of such an intervention, and which may be dealt with separately later, should the opportunity occur.

It is easy — in the light of this criterion — to establish a noticeable distinction whereas the previous classification seemed to point to a uniformity.

To give a practical example, let us consider two of the projects which in order to develop *participation*, have as a priority objective, the achievement on the part of the people of the *capacity to undertake on one's own initiatives for improvements in the community (element E.)*. We can see that in these two cases:

— the one, Abruzzi, decides in very clear cut way for alternative A., which corresponds to the fact that the proposition *to undertake on one's own initiatives*

in the community has a definite collective meaning. This is evident because the initiatives spoken of are essentially and always group initiatives, and also because great care has always been taken to establish and make use of communication channels through which informations, opinions and discussions concerning the initiatives could extend simultaneously through the community as a whole;

— the other, Borgo a Mozzano, appears on the contrary to choose definitely alternative B., and in connexion with this, the element E. takes on quite a different meaning: the aim is then to stimulate and encourage the development of technical and managerial qualities in single individuals of the community, which — at least in the beginning — is only a background and a limit to their activities.

From both the alternatives, however, we can derive a definition of *community*; and we will try to make it explicit here, as it is one of the points where the greatest number of criticisms and self-criticisms have been concentrated, though, up to now, no satisfactory conclusion seems to have been reached.

The term "community" is used in the projects to define *the smallest socio-territorial unit where a full set of significant social relationships can develop*, or, in other words, a social and territorial space where a group of people can lead their individual and social lives without anomalous limitations.

We must stress the fact that, once more, the general agreement we can find on this approximate definition, hides in fact quite a number of different assumptions. The most significant of the divergences in this interpretation is the one between the people who say (or assume) that the community in which they are operating *is* this, and those who maintain that it *should be*, it *should become* this. The great differences in operational assumptions that derive from this difference in definition can easily be surmised, and will appear again in our examination of the projects. In both cases, however, it is clear that once this conception of community, as well as the empirical model concerning the relationship between community and society,⁶ have been taken as a framework we can get hold of a mediation between individuals and society at large, which justifies and makes it possible to verify the identification between increase in participation and larger diffusion of the decision making power.

Only if the community is the space in which a man can live a full life, and if the relationship between society as a whole and community coincides with the relationship between a system and a sub-system (which in some ways reproduces society's essential elements, and in another way constitutes its building unit) can we maintain that an active and conscious function undertaken in the community dimension is equivalent to increase one's power to make decisions affecting the development of society as a whole.

2.5. Individuation and Functions of Leaders

Another specific problem, unquestionably related to what we have said until now, is the individuation of "leaders" and the function assigned to them.

We use the term leaders, though it is not present in all the documents, because the work hypothesis concerning them seems to be common to all of the projects: generally we see that by this term are defined all those people who, either because of formal institutional reasons, or because they possess specific abilities, qualities, means or capacities, appear to be recognized by one or more groups, or by the whole community as having a certain authority and a role of "orientators".

Because of this role, the individuation of the leaders appears immediately as a priority task, whether the aim is the diffusion of technical or technological innovations in a particular sector, or the success of initiatives concerning the community as a whole, or a better knowledge of the community itself etc.

The functions assigned to the leaders in the projects under examination can be roughly described as follows:

- (a) collecting data and informations on the community itself;
- (b) vouching for the project to the people;
- (c) spreading informations on the activities of the project;
- (d) stimulating people's support of these activities;
- (e) checking with them the results obtained and the effects achieved.

These functions in certain cases can be undertaken by the same persons, but in general — both where formal and informal leaders are concerned — they tend to be distributed amongst different persons.

The greatest difference between the projects consists — at least in the programmatic declaration — in the preference accorded to contacts with one type of leaders rather than the other, though of course this preference is never an absolute one, to the total exclusion of one type.

In fact, the difference we mention is much less significant in the actual practice mainly because of two reasons. First of all, the initial choice tends to be modified as the intervention develops (theoretically, as participation increases, so should increase the interest for informal leaders, in preference to others); secondly, though the preference expressed may be a good indicator of the workers' attitudes, it would be quite unrealistic to assume that there would necessarily be a difference in behaviour and attitudes (positive, negative or neutral) between formal and informal leaders. Similarities and differences, consensus and conflict, reference to different frameworks or interests are just as likely to be found in both groups, and can be interpreted as variables existing within a close system (the community): it is within this community and in function of it that they can best be understood and eventually settled.

The difference between the various projects is much more relevant, however, if we try to find the relationship between attitudes towards the leaders, and acceptance of an alternative conception of the community: as we said before, for some the community is a *reality already in existence* in its essential structures (even if the functioning of some of the structures needs improving), while for others the community is the *general aim*, and the project a way of helping to reach it.

A. In the first case (see in particular, though in a different sense, Borgo a Mozzano, Sardinia, CECAT, Palma di Montechiaro) the priority is definitely given to the formal leaders: both to existing ones, and the ones whose creation is one of the aims of the activity, considering that one of the main objectives is precisely that of enriching the institutional structure of the community.

B. In the second case, (here again the examples present a great deal of individual differences, Abruzzi, Partinico, Comunità, Molise, Avigliano) though of course the aim of consolidating institutionally the successive achievements is present,⁷ attention appears to be focused particularly on the "participation" factor. This entails a special interest for informal leaders, who are seen not so much as individuals who are more sensitive than others, and freer from "official" ties, but rather as *roles* which can be filled by a more or less rapid turnover of different persons.

There are on the other hand two elements which appear to be common to all projects and are quite important:

- (a) though there are some instances of the opposite opinion, in general the leadership phenomenon is considered as necessary and inevitable ("natural"), independently from the specific context in which it is found and the forms it can take in relation to the context. This observation allows us to be more precise on the subject of "participation": the concept which is at the root of these projects. It is never a question of an equal distribution of *power* (be it limited to the community level), but of *equal opportunities of access and turnover in the positions of leadership*; to these positions is connected the delegation of a certain amount of power, variable in relation to different factors;
- (b) as the problem of leadership is posed here in function of the development of the activities to be undertaken by the projects, which in their turn appear "a priori" in relation to the community, the leader is conceived as an *innovator* within the community itself, i.e. as a channel through which informations, orientations, values and attitudes, or in general cultural elements belonging to society at large, can reach the community in a form more easily acceptable.

We cannot discuss here this point more thoroughly, but it will be useful to point out that such a conception of the leader's role (as well as the opposite one of the traditional local leader), which may appear quite realistic in view of the experiences made in the projects, sets a series of questions difficult to solve on the subject of the relationship between community and society at large, which we tried to describe previously in our scheme.

2.6. *General Model of Society and Definition of the Field of Intervention*

If we want to summarize what we have said in this first section, we should be able to see fairly clearly the close interconnections between *general model of society, use made of it in order to assess the society where one is operating, and definition of the field of intervention*.

The projects we have examined so far appear quite different as far as the first two elements are concerned, while they are in substantial agreement — at least apparently — in defining the territorial community as the field of action. This allows us to come to two firm conclusions:

- (a) the choice of the territorial community appears to be independent from a univocal ideological standpoint;
- (b) this choice appears closely linked, however, to a non scientific factor, which shows all the characteristics of a value choice: the one which in the previous pages we called *reformism*.

It will be interesting, in the course of our analysis, to keep these points in mind, and find out whether, and in which way the further developments of the projects did in fact reconsider them, both at a conceptual level (in particular concerning the notions of *community* and *participation*) and at a methodological level.

3. **Role Definition and the Choice of Objectives**

Some of the elements we have taken into consideration in the preceding sections have considerable implications as far as the role chosen by the different projects is concerned, as well as for the general and specific objectives that derive from it, particularly at the stage preliminary to field work.

In particular, we think that the choice and the use of definite theoretical and operational models is closely linked to the assessment of the society where the projects had to operate, and this will be the theme of the following pages. We will therefore, in dealing with this question, recall a few of the points we have already made.

3.1. Objectives of the Projects' Activities

The declarations contained in the documents we examined, concerning the role the projects intended to assume and the related objectives, seem to confirm our observations on the "reformist attitude" of the work, but they also appear to pose some questions.

The general aims for the projects' activities can, on that basis, be grouped as follows:

A. *Formation of intervention centres aiming at a radical transformation of the social relationships existing in the chosen community*, mainly through stimulating direct action by the population. This action must be prepared and accompanied by a work of education, information, discussion with the people of the specific and general problems that appear most serious and urgent, and by making public and explaining the initiatives, once they have been decided and started. The declarations nearer to this model can be found in the documents produced in Partinico.⁸

B. *Creation of work centres experimenting with new operational techniques*, whose results can start a process of *gradual* social transformation in the intervention area, and, at a general level, can become a source of reliable indications for similar interventions. In this case social transformation is considered important for two closely linked reasons:

- (a) the need to prevent that the socio-cultural evolution of the population should follow too slow a rhythm when compared with the rate of national development, so that the people in question would be unable to make full use of all the advantages and opportunities offered;
- (b) the need for the socio-cultural development exigencies to interact with those connected to the economic development, both for speeding the process up and for maintaining a balance within it — once given levels of general development were reached.

This seems to be the aim of the programmatic declarations of the greatest number of projects, in particular: Abruzzi, Avigliano, CECAT, Comunità, Molise, Palma di Montechiaro.

C. *Creation of intervention centres, mainly of a technical-economic character* to stimulate some local production processes — technically, technologically, and from the point of view of staff qualification and better production — so that they can reach the general level. In this case, social work — where it exists — has simply the function of facilitating and supporting this type of work. The more evident examples of this approach are Sardinia and Borgo a Mozzano.

3.2. Comparison between Previous Classifications and Roles Chosen by the Projects

It may be useful at this point to compare some of the preceding classifications with this last one, that shows the roles and objectives selected by the projects. If we consider the groupings made in pgfs 2.1. and 2.2., we can observe some significant uniformities:

Table 2. Relationship between the Assessment of Society and Choice of Role and Objectives (see 2.1)

	Assessment of society			Choice of role and objectives		
	historico-political	technico-political	centered on techn. ass.	A	B	C
Abruzzi		x			x	
Avigliano		x			x	
Borgo a M.			x			x
CECAT		x			x	
Comunità	x				x	
Molise	x				x	
Palma di M.			x		x	
Partinico	x			x		
Sardinia			x			x

Table 3. Relationship between the Assessment of Society and Choice of Role and Objectives (see 2.2).

	Assessment of society			Choice of role and objectives		
	Generalized approach	Focalized approach	Intermediate approach	A	B	C
Abruzzi			x		x	
Avigliano			x		x	
Borgo a M.		x				x
CECAT			x			x
Comunità	x				x	
Molise	x				x	
Palma di M.			x		x	
Partinico	x			x		
Sardinia		x				x

We can then observe from the examination of these tables:

- (a) there is an absolute coincidence between the *historico-political* outlook and the *generalized* approach, and this line of thought tends to exclude the alternative C (creation of intervention centres, mainly of a technical-economic character) of the choices related to role and objectives;

- (b) there is an almost complete coincidence (Palma di Montechiaro excepted, see 2.2.) between *technico-political* outlook and the *intermediate* approach, and this line of thought seems to lead to a single choice, i.e. alternative B (creation of centres experimenting with new operational techniques);
- (c) there is also a complete agreement (Palma di Montechiaro excepted) between an outlook mainly centered on *technical assistance* and the *focalized* approach which leads to alternative C (creation of intervention centres mainly of a technical-economic character).

If we want then, to build a scale of "affinities" on the basis of the observations we have made so far, we have five groups of projects as follows.

α) Partinico; β) Comunità, Molise; γ) Abruzzi, Avigliano, CECAT; δ) Palma di Montechiaro; ε) Borgo a Mozzano, Sardinia.

3.3. Role of the Projects in Internal Depressed Areas and Interpretation of Under-development

It is interesting to note that according to this way of looking at things, we would have to reconsider what we said before, at least for Partinico (and other possible projects of group A), concerning the "reformist" attitude of all community development initiatives. For this purpose we shall need to be more specific about some important aspects of the considerations at the basis of the projects themselves and in particular those concerning the specific context in which people wanted to operate, and the criteria used to interpret its place within the general socio-economic system.

The conceptual framework which the community projects adopted was the one concerning the so called "problem of under-development". Within it, their interest was centered mainly on the problems of the "*internal depressed areas*", that is on the imbalance existing within the same socio-economic national system, between the standards of life and the development rhythms of different sub-systems (defined either according to territorial criteria or to the economic sectors, or others).

As far as the projects were concerned — in a dimension to be chosen for operational reasons — these problems appear to be focused on the attainment by some parts of the system of the socio-economic level reached on average by the general system taken as a whole. However, some implications derive from this outlook, which ought to be underlined:

- (a) In general terms, underdevelopment is interpreted as a *delay* in development. This interpretation does not admit of the possibility that the coexistence within the same system of rich and poor areas, or of imbalance between different sectors may represent a *structural characteristic* of that system, the out-

come of "rational" decisions, which would be at the root of the actual situations of development.

(b) This point of view therefore, tends to present the socio-economic development of poorer areas as obviously and immediately advantageous to the community as a whole, *keeping constant all the fundamental structural and functional characteristics* of the community at the intervention's time.

(c) The basic assumption is then, that the main obstacles to the development of particular areas or sectors are to be found within them (typical in this sense is Dolci's argument on "waste" and on the possible development of agriculture in ten Sicilian "comuni", or the way Shell in Borgo a Mozzano and OECE in Sardinia looked at the problem of work productivity).⁹

In this light, then, the work aiming at stimulating development, breaking that logic which Myrdal calls "circular causation", considers as a solution not the transfer of resources from other parts of the system to the underdeveloped areas, but on the contrary the prevention of the drainage of resources (e.g. emigration) and the development of new activities, according to the potential local resources, or the reactivation of traditional activities still susceptible of development.¹⁰

These two lines of work appear to be in some measure interdependent. Within this logic, we can observe apparently different initiatives, as the support given to artisan activities in Avigliano, the introduction of new cultural techniques in Sardinia and Borgo a Mozzano (which did not affect substantially the general agricultural settlement of the areas), the already mentioned research by Dolci on the agriculture of some "comuni" in the Palermo and Agrigento provinces (which — not by chance — is developed, at the same time as an argument against the Rossi-Doria theory on the inevitability of emigration), the cooperative initiatives of the Molise project and those of Comunità aiming at restructuring and "re-integrating" as a "whole" the territorial unit of the Canavese area at the productive, cultural and urban levels etc.

Where emigration is concerned, this problem was not felt with the same intensity by all the projects, but we must observe that in most cases the approach to it implied an interesting contradiction.

There is no doubt, that considering the assumptions of community development for depressed areas, even in those cases (as Palma di Montechiaro, CECAT, Abruzzi, Avigliano, Partinico) where the problem was faced out of necessity, often with measures aiming at a better preparation and qualification of potential emigrants, the solution taken ought to have been explicitly described as a temporary and intermediate one awaiting the results of interventions, to show their full effect.

In reality, it is only in Partinico that one can find this orientation. In the other projects, and particularly in Abruzzi and CECAT, we do not find, as we

did in Partinico, an open attack on emigration, but — on the contrary — an attack against a conception of emigration as a “shame” to be hidden: conception that on the one hand contributes to the lack of information on the real size of the phenomenon at a general level, and on the other contributes also to the low level of occupational qualification and awareness of his own rights on the part of the emigrant worker.

This last way of looking at emigration definitely contradicts the conception the projects seem to have of underdevelopment. On the other hand this contradiction is much more fruitful and stimulating than the consistency shown in Partinico: the latter in fact led to analyses and positions that it is very difficult to reconcile with the relationship between local communities and society as a whole, while the former allowed some projects to introduce from the start a valuable corrective element against the risk of a “community ideology”, of planning from the grass roots, which would ignore the importance and the weight of the general development lines.

As we have seen, this approach has suggested the possibility, which is quite interesting from a sociological point of view, of salvaging some cultural traditions and local occupations. This kind of salvaging operation has certainly nothing in common with a presumed “return to older civilizations” fancied by some literary aesthetes, and has as a positive aim an *active integration in the development of the socio-economic system* of some of the traditions, restoring to them a function similar to the one they had in the past, under different general conditions.¹¹

On the other hand, this way of looking at the problem of regional underdevelopment contributes to highlight a fundamental concept, strictly linked with the problem of *participation*: the existence of a series of specific correlations between socio-cultural and economic development. A neglect of this correlation can transform economic intervention into a phenomenon of further *disruption*.¹²

It must be clear, then, that the general validity of this outlook depends a great deal — and first of all as an instrument of analysis in order to prepare the interventions — on the definition of community in socio-territorial terms.

Should the territorial dimension be lacking, it would become very difficult to understand the negative charge implied by the word *disruption*, used to describe a set of phenomena which — considering the general structural characteristics of the system — could be easily seen as a stage in the process of reorganization and recomposition and rearrangement of society as a whole.

But this last point of view would mean re-discussing not only a conception of community favoured by many, but also the concepts of participation and leadership connected with it, which help to define a certain operational domaine.¹³

We want to come back at this point to the question we asked at the beginning

of this section, that is whether it was right to attribute a "reformist" character to all the community projects.¹⁴

It should be clear from the above that the reformist aspect is not implicit in the general intentions expressed by the sponsors and the subjective interpretation they give of their own role, but rather is closely linked to the extent to which both the planning and the implementing of the interventions is anchored to a certain concept of the community, and to certain interpretative models of the relationship between community and society and of underdevelopment.

3.4. *Choice of the Area*

At this point, according to the original scheme of this study, we should have dealt with the problem of the choice of the specific intervention area. According to the preceding pages, we should have discussed (a), how did the choice of the area take place in actual fact and (b) which elements were taken into consideration in order to verify that within the area the conditions existed that would enable the projects to reach their objectives (or in other words, how the starting hypotheses were verified).¹⁵

Unfortunately, the documents available did not allow us to find sufficiently reliable and significant answers to these questions. This is due not so much to the lack of data, as to the difficulty of classifying them according to a scheme that would enable us to compare anew the various projects. We decided therefore to make use of some of the interesting observations that could be made on this subject elsewhere in this study, where they could enrich other specific analyses.

As a general indication, on the issue of the choice of the area chosen as socio-territorial zone of activity, we can distinguish the projects in two groups:

- A. The projects for which the adoption and elaboration of given instruments and objectives is the *consequence* of the need or the decision to solve the problems of a particular area, whose choice pre-existed the project;
- B. The projects for which the choice of the intervention area represented the need of finding an optimal area, where a practical application could be made of a corpus of aims, methodologies and techniques largely elaborated previous to the project, at least in their main lines.

Both groups could be subdivided in further subgroups, as for instance for the group A, where we can find:

- A.1. Comunità and CECAT, both born out of economic and institutional situations already existing in the intervention area (the industry, the "Comune" Council)
- A.2. Partinico and Palma di Montechiaro, born out of a "*de visu*" ascertainment of the subhuman conditions of life of the population in two areas of Sicily.

4. Relationships between the Projects and Interested Agencies

From now on, we will leave aside the programmatic documents, which we have considered until now, to deal with the subject matter of the intervention itself, giving a special attention to its organizational aspects.

4.1. Definition of "Agency"

The first problem to be dealt with is the one concerning the type of agencies with which the various projects appear to have been linked. At this point, however, we shall have to define our terms.

At least within the limits of this specific field, the term "agencies" is used to indicate those official organizations — public or private — having a formal structure in view of reaching precise institutional objectives, and to which the projects' operators can resort to in all those cases where the intervention's development makes it necessary to open up specific sectors, connected with those precise objectives. In some cases, the relationship between agency defined in this way and project is in fact a relationship between cause and effect: the decision to allocate funds and investments in a certain direction on the part of an agency was what made it possible to start a project, or else in some ways conditioned its development. Even in these cases, however, this close relationship can seldom be identical with a causal one. One could sometimes assume that in some cases it was a question of a partial identity, in the sense of the relationship between an agency and one of its sectors or services: we will see, though, that this assumption would be a very restrictive one, and would be a very poor instrument of analysis. First of all, it would introduce an element of heterogeneity in the projects, while it might be perhaps more significant as a classification leading to an evaluation of the agencies rather than of the projects. Secondly, it would tend to underline unduly the institutional characteristics of the projects to the detriment of the "experimental" ones; as the aim of this study is not a historical one, but is, rather, an analysis of those elements which can contribute to a future evaluation of the experiences made so far, we feel that such an assumption would be contradictory with our general intent.

Because of our initial objective, then, we thought it more advisable to take the opposite standpoint: that is, to consider as *autonomous agencies* the projects themselves. In this light, we will not be able of course to develop in this study all the full implications of this line of thought; but we hope that this approach will enable whoever might want to pursue this subject further to appreciate fully the multiplicity of relationships (global and sectorial, occasional or stable, informal or institutionalised) that developed between the projects and various agencies, without giving up the attempt to keep the projects individually as the main focus, and even including all these events in their development dynamics.

In other words, our starting point here will be the following: each project will be considered as an independent agency, set up in order to implement definite objectives. For this purpose, each has an internal structure consisting: (a) of *levels* as far as the attribution of managerial and staff functions, and the decisional power connected with them; (b) *sectors*, in relation to the operational needs of resolving the general objectives into specific ones, to be pursued separately. In the actual development of the intervention, beginning from the planning stage, it can easily happen that for one or more *sectors* relationships of cooperation with other agencies are developed, in proportion to their usefulness in view of specific and limited aims, and provided they are not in conflict with the interests and general aims of the project as a whole. Of course, these relationships are always a two-way system, and can therefore have considerable effects even within the project, both in the functional relations between the two structural systems (levels-sectors) and in those between different levels and different sectors.

Keeping in mind all this, as well as the complex interactional process in the background (between the project as an *agency* and the socio-economic field in which it operates), it is possible now to state that by the term *project organization* we will mean here the whole set of types of equilibrium reached in the various stages of development by the three elements mentioned above (operators — outside agencies — socioeconomic context) *considered as the elements constituting the project itself*: we will not discuss the set of declared institutional objectives, and of roles set out in the initial staff and management plan.

4.2. Relationships between the Projects and Outside Agencies

Though this attempt to deal separately with each theme will lead us to repetitions, and to a schematic method of presentation, we will then discuss the first point concerning the relations between projects and outside agencies. And it is fairly natural to begin by considering the role played by the latter in determining the birth and initial stages of the projects in question.

We can then distinguish the projects in three groups:

A. Projects owing their birth to the direct initiative of an outside agency

In this group we find Sardinia (OECE), Borgo a Mozzano (Shell), Avigliano (Esso), Comunità (Olivetti - Movimento di Comunità)

B. Projects born out of the connection between a sponsoring group and one or more outside agencies

To this group belong: Abruzzi (CEPAS - UNRRA CASAS); CECAT (CECAT - Local authority of Castelfranco - Ministry of Education and other private and public agencies); Molise (Molise Project - ANIMI-ISPES)

C. *Projects born out of the private initiative of one or more voluntary groups that later constituted themselves as an agency*

These appear to be — though in very different ways —: Partinico (group of voluntary workers and supporters of Danilo Dolci, which constituted themselves in: *Centro Studi e Iniziative per la Piena Occupazione* (Centre for Studies and Initiatives for Full Employment) on one side, and *Comitati Amici di Danilo Dolci* (Committees of Friends of Danilo Dolci) on the other; Palma di Montechiaro: *Centro per lo Sviluppo di Comunità di Palma di M.* (Centre for the Community Development of Palma di M.) and *Associazione per lo Sviluppo di Comunità* (Association for Community Development).

This grouping tends to hide a very important problem: the question of the financing of the projects. On this subject we must observe that quite apart from the different solutions adopted (and these differences are far from being of no consequence, as we will see) there is a common element, which is not purely a matter of organization: the function of financer always carries with it the attribution of controlling power, endowed with special characteristics. This control concerns two decisional levels: directly, the *policy* level, and by policy we mean here the sum total of decisions, attitudes and behaviours in the *public* sphere, which may characterize the position of the project workers, *qua* workers, in respect of the socio-economic and political structures of society; indirectly, insofar as it is connected with the availability of funds, the *tecnico-methodological level*.

This power of control is one of the central problems to the *autonomy* of the projects, and as such it is dealt with by the different projects in different and significant ways.

In the projects belonging to group A, autonomy is conceived as the result of a *committal* or *delegation* by the sponsoring agency. In this way a "space" would be created within which the autonomy of the project would be, in a way, guaranteed "*a priori*". If we keep in mind our previous observations, we can see more clearly the roots of the approach "centered on technical assistance" and "focused", of Sardinia and Borgo a Mozzano (where obviously the problem of a political control does not arise, and autonomy is programmatically sought for on a technical and local level) as well as the basis of the "technico-political" approach in Avigliano (where the *technical* autonomy is claimed on the basis of a sectorial qualification due to an already existing project, and the *political* one is found in an introjection of the sponsors' motivations).¹⁶ The same interiorization, which is prompted not only by a need for action but also by the sharing of an historical, political and sociological interpretation of reality, is to be found also in Comunità.

In group B, the problem of autonomy has a very different aspect, as the projects themselves are born from a contract, that is from a give and take relationship (more or less precise) between a sponsoring group and outside agencies. In this case there is no identification, and this fact seems on the one hand to guarantee that there will be autonomy particularly at a technical level (it is not just a coincidence that Abruzzi, CECAT and Molise all had as their main objective "the creation of centres for experimenting new operational techniques"), while on the other hand it does not prevent raising the problem at a political level. In fact it does represent a safeguard for a certain margin of freedom even at that level.¹⁷

In group C, finally, it is only apparently that the problem does not exist. In fact, even in those projects, a distinction became necessary between workers and supporters (financers), and though the attempt was made to underline its purely functional nature, and its irrelevance when it came to a common participation in decisions, it did create problems that involved both "functional" groups. In both the cases in question (Partinico and Palma di Montechiaro), it is quite significant that these problems — though in different ways and with different results — brought forward precisely the themes of *power and control*.

4.3. *Programs of the Projects and Relationship between Agency and Project*

We can now make use of a different criterion for grouping the projects, which may confirm and clarify these issues.

Let us ask ourselves in which way did the programs of each project interest the agencies involved with them.¹⁸ The groups we can form in this way are very similar to the previous one, but they show further details. The functions assigned to the projects, appear to be roughly the following (keeping the same order):

- A. A practical demonstration of the functions and social potentialities of industries and/or international organizations, the existence of which is an expression at the political-administrative level of those same potentialities;
- B. The experimentation of specific methodologies and techniques of social intervention as an instrument to increase the usefulness, complete and render more efficient the action of the agency or agencies;
- C. The practical demonstration of the value and operational effectiveness of an association based on the free assumption of responsibility and on the voluntary participation of all members, with equal power and equal rights.

We can then add a further observation to the previous ones: group B appears to be the only one — even if only formally — where the relationship between project and agency is explicitly (almost programmatically) seen as a dynamic one, and where the possibility is foreseen of mutual modifications of the two participants (of course at an operational level, not at an institutional one).

This fact seems to go hand in hand with the “vertical” organizational forms (or levels, as we termed them before) through which power is distributed within the project itself.

If we can be allowed a further schematic presentation, we can say that in the projects in group A., quite independently from the personalities of the people involved, there is a tendency towards the application of a *bureaucratic type of model*, within which authority appears as the result of a delegation from above, linked with the assigning of given roles as provided by the management and staff plan. We don't think it is a coincidence that in some of these projects, problems relating to role definitions and relationships between different roles and different sectors of activity (or “services”) appear to have gained considerable importance.

In group B., where we can find also the same kind of difficulties, especially in the specifically “social” sectors, the tendency is rather to solve them by the application of a *democratic model* of general discussion, and free circulation of ideas, suggestions, opinions and criticisms, institutionalized both in a vertical and in a horizontal direction. This appears to have been facilitated by the particular contractual relationship between projects and interested agencies, and by the particular characteristic of “experimental autonomy” we have mentioned.¹⁹

Group C, finally, seems to have developed a tendency for a *power of charismatic nature*, from which derive both the authority invested in a single person or in a group, and the legitimate use — by others — of a control on common activities.

5. Structure of the Projects and Relationship with the Communities

This is a subject particularly difficult to present in a schematic form, as it has very complex dynamics. Even in the case of projects with relatively simple staffing, and whose plans were from the beginning fairly formal, it is difficult to perceive completely the numerous factors that have influenced the particular development of some activities preferably to others, the greater or lesser obstacles met with in the course of action, the greater or lesser attention to the demands that arose during the course of the project itself. We will limit our presentation therefore, to those facts for which we can find sufficient evidence

Table 4. The Projects' Activities

	Nursery school		Compulsory school		Vocational training		Adult Education		Tech. Assist. for Agricult. Coops.		Technical Assist. to Farmers		Tech. Assist. to Artisans and Small Industries		Technic. Assist. to Artisan Coops.		Technic. Assist. (Other forms)		Health and Medic. Assist.		Training and Up-Grad of Staff		Training for Operators Outside Social Studies and Research		Promot. and Org. of Protest Groups		Promot. of Local Author. Associat.		Promot. of Trade Union Movements		Assistance to Emigrants		
	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	D	S	
Abruzzi	XO	XO	XΔ	XO	-	XΔ	XO	-	XO	-	XO	-	XO	XO	-	XO	-	XO	-	XO	XO	XO	XO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	XO	XO
Avigliano	-	-	-	-	XO	XO	-	O	-	-	XO	-	XO	XO	-	O	XO	-	-	-	-	-	XO	XO	-	-	-	-	-	-	XO	-	
Borgo a M.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	XO	-	XO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	XO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
CECAT	-	-	XΔ	-	-	XO	XΔ	XΔ	XO	-	XO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	XO	XΔ	XΔ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	XO	-
Comunità	-	XΔ	-	XΔ	-	-	XO	-	XO	-	-	XΔ	-	-	-	-	XO	-	-	XΔ	XΔ	XO	XΔ	-	XO	XO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Molise	-	-	-	XΔ	XO	-	XO	-	XO	-	XO	-	-	-	-	-	XO	-	-	XΔ	-	XO	-	XO	-	-	-	-	-	-	XO	-	-
Palma di M.	XΔ	-	-	XΔ	-	XΔ	XO	-	-	-	-	XΔ	-	-	-	-	XO	XΔ	-	XO	XΔ	XO	XO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	XΔ	-	-
Partinico	-	-	-	XΔ	-	-	XΔ	-	XΔ	-	XΔ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	XΔ	-	XΔ	XΔ	XΔ	XO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sardinia	-	XΔ	-	XΔ	XO	XO	XO	XO	XO	XO	-	XO	XO	XO	XO	-	-	-	-	XΔ	-	XO	XO	XO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

D = Direct
S = Supportive

X = Undertaken
- = Non undertaken

O = Foreseen
Δ = Non foreseen

D = Direct
S = Supportive
X = Undertaken
- = Non undertaken
O = Foreseen
Δ = Non foreseen

in the available data, and which look interesting from the point of view of evaluation. We will discuss then the following four points:

- (a) the projects' activities
- (b) research studies undertaken during the projects
- (c) the staff used in the projects
- (d) some problems connected with the methodology, particularly concerning the relationship with the communities where the projects operated.

5.1. *The Projects' Activities*

In order to have a comprehensive picture of the main sectors of activities undertaken by the projects, we have set our table 4. As we can see, there is apparently a broad correspondence between the programs formulated at the beginning and the work actually done: ²⁰ in fact, it is possible to observe that the latter was far greater than foreseen.

We will briefly examine the cases of disagreement, as the data are not exact enough, and too small in numbers to enable us to generalize on them.

We find eight cases of disagreement "by defect" (activities planned but not undertaken), and 37 cases of disagreement by "excess" (activities undertaken, though unplanned for).

The first eight cases are distributed as follows: three concern "supporting activities", while five concern activities to be undertaken directly by the project. The "excess" cases are more uniformly distributed: 17 against 20. It is interesting to note which are the activities that have increased; they are, in this order: activities concerning the compulsory age schools (+ 7), the health field (+ 4), and then equally, nursery schools, adult education, staff training (both for the projects and in the area), research, and activities in connection with local authorities (+ 3). The only decrease which we can discuss is the formation of artisans' cooperatives (— 3), which, particularly where the Avigliano project is concerned, is probably due to the short life of its activity.

Table 4. has a particularly obvious feature — the distribution between activities undertaken directly by the projects, and activities of a supporting nature — which it may be interesting to discuss further. This discussion is particularly relevant today, when the problems of national and regional planning are no longer an issue of principles and theory, but have reached the stage of elaboration of methods and instruments, as well as of collection of data and information on the real situation.

We can ask ourselves whether in the project's experiences of these different types of activities, there is something which may still be useful, both methodologically and as far as the content of the action is concerned, if worked out on a larger scale.

We can at this point consider the issue of the two different types of activities at two different levels.

We could form the hypothesis — at first sight quite legitimate — that in order to define the specific area of competence of our, or future, projects, we should focus our attention on the activities undertaken directly by the projects. The existence of the two types of activity, in this hypothesis, would be merely a reflection of institutional failures or deficiencies of the society where the project is working.²¹ The presence of supporting activities should not be interpreted as an alternative type of community development projects, but rather as an attempt to indicate the kind of more advanced society aimed at by the projects — in which, hopefully, the projects would no longer have to undertake a supplementary role, and could instead do their specific work more fully.

Unfortunately Table 4. faces us with an unmistakable fact: it is not possible to establish a clear distinction in kind (with the exception of the activities concerning the organization and promotion of protest groups) between activities that have *only* been undertaken directly and activities undertaken *only* as a support, consultation, or improvement to existing services and institutions. This is after all the clearer, if we consider that it is quite possible to think of a society structured institutionally, economically, territorially etc. in such a way that all the activities listed in Table 4. would be undertaken directly by the ordinary services provided by the State (also with the exception of “promotion of protest action”).

On the basis of our previous considerations, we would reach the conclusion that the community development projects' role is merely and exclusively a “vicarious” one, undertaking functions which should properly belong to society as a whole, but which have *not yet* been assumed by it. This conclusion however, can be modified by a second type of considerations, by introducing the notion of gradual development, in a temporal sense.

Even if we agree that the role of this kind of initiatives is a vicarious one, we can hypothesize two different solutions to our problem, which would confirm the usefulness of the projects:

(a) the society's deficiencies, which justify the existence of the projects, cannot be modified *en bloc* and in a short time. In this case the projects would have a reasonable function, and their development would consist in a long series of “transferrals” of responsibility — beginning with activities undertaken directly, which would later be assumed by the appropriate public sectors with the projects' support, to be finally completely transferred and therefore eliminated from the projects' field of action.

(b) at the same time as the previous process goes on, new deficiencies are created, or a new malfunctioning in the relationship between “real society” and institutions comes into being, so that new occasions (or new tasks to be undertaken directly) are created for the projects' intervention.

Obviously, some rather important implications are present in this type of considerations, of which the most relevant to our theme are:

- the truly “reformist” nature of the projects’ work is thereby confirmed;

- *participation* becomes a continuing objective, as one of the main motivations of the “contestation” attitude of the projects;

- there is a continuing need for operational flexibility and the bringing up to date of information concerning the above points so that the projects may evolve, beyond the territorial definition, in the directions we have suggested.²²

Coming back to our data, we see that there was a gradual moving away from the initial plan, which considered a structured set of activities centered on the hypothesis of a community being an organic whole, capable of autonomous development. In this sense we feel that amongst the increases mentioned above, some are particularly significant: help for potential emigrants (see pfg. 3.3.), technical assistance to agricultural enterprises (by far superior to activities to stimulate the formation of cooperatives) and the organization of staff training activities, both for the projects’ own staff and for the staff of interested agencies in the area (which could be interpreted as the need to enlarge and put into better focus the initial approach as well as to strengthen its basis, which contact with socio-economic realities may have placed under discussion).

In general terms, this change in the initial course appears to have taken place in the direction of a gradual reduction of the importance assigned in actual fact to the *community* dimension; this decrease of interest is never explicitly stated, but can be deduced, in a negative way, from the increased attention given — in each project — to other aspects of the work. According to the different outlook of the various projects and the type of operators involved, these aspects may include society as a whole, or particular sectors, functions of that society, or even particular groups, services, or individuals within the community itself. In both cases, however, we have the tendency to resolve the community, in the course of action, into a number of sectors and levels; this tendency is not only due to operational needs, for in this case it was already foreseen in the programmatic statements that the project itself should find a balance between the different operational sectors so as to integrate them.²³ On the contrary centrifugal trends seem to come into existence, though at least for a certain period never clearly discussed at a theoretical level to the extent of re-examining the initial assumptions.

One of the most difficult and important problems the projects had to face was the planning of their work, so that the intervention, necessarily composed of different sectors, could maintain a unitary character.

As the solution of this problem could not of course be taken for granted, nor left to the good intentions and commitment of the workers, a preliminary statement as clear as possible on the general objectives, which would also contain an explanation of the functional character of the sectorial objectives in the framework of the total aims was thought sufficient. At the same time, great attention was given to the internal organizational aspects, in the attempt to reconcile also at that level the operational *autonomy* of each sector (whether or not it be institutionalized) with a *general management function*, which on the one side should coordinate and distribute the tasks, and on the other guarantee the circulation and collective discussion of sectorial problems and results.²⁴

Each project appears therefore — in operational terms — as a *plan*. As we said before, this plan finds its validity in the individuation of a specific and unitary space, which is assumed as having fairly precise limits both at a conceptual and a practical level: the *community*.

In this sense we can conceive each project as being simultaneously:

- (a) a group of interconnected activities, made possible by the delimitation of a unitary space (community x, y etc.) and by the use of techniques and methodologies appropriate to interventions in it
- (b) a working plan aimed at verifying experimentally both the validity of such a delimitation (in conceptual and practical terms), and therefore, the usefulness of those techniques and methodologies.

The difficulties met with in actual fact, in this attempt to harmonize in a unity the different activity sectors, are therefore doubly significant. They highlight the tendency, in general very hard to check effectively, of each sector to pursue its own aims neglecting the need for integration, or even becoming "competitive" with the others.

Thus, the experimentation with methods and instruments remains within the limits of the initial approaches of each discipline, and an interdisciplinary cooperation is never achieved; the problems felt by the operators in each sector, and the solutions suggested by them, indicate clearly that those limits are still present. In this way, too, a process gets started, which is just the one the projects wanted to avoid: to make a practical example, agricultural experts increasingly consider agricultural problems independently from the problems of the community as a whole. In the end, they will take a very different course from the initial one, and here are some of the most relevant aspects of it:

- (a) they tend to overevaluate — in terms of power — the *function of the expert* in the decision-making operations in their sector: this approach necessarily shapes the relationship

between expert and farmers according to an authoritarian model, which is entirely contradictory with the participation hypothesis

- (b) they tend to adopt, amongst the possible solutions to the problems they are faced with, the ones that appear most "rational", not in view of the needs for internal balance (be it a dynamic one) of the community's socio-economic and cultural situation, but rather in view of the needs and general prospects of the agricultural sector on a national basis.

We can see then, that in actual fact, operational and practical needs gradually tend to wear away the definition of community, as a socio-territorial unit capable of presenting a suitable field of experimentation of methodologies, and of solutions to certain problems.²⁵

Of course, all this could not be perceived in this form, and in all its consequences during the projects' lifetime. The deep struggle, through which the real meaning of these events was brought to the awareness of the projects' workers, had very different aspects in each project: sometimes it appeared as a conflict of functions, in other cases it took the form of trying to shape the work differently, elaborating a real development plan for a larger area, or else it became an appeal on an ethical plan, or it reached the point where there was an almost complete turnover of workers. It did however, have two obviously relevant effects:

(a) on the one side, community development — which was the general aim of the projects — became increasingly a *part* of the work, generally given to a specific sector (the so called social work department). In this way, on one hand its meaning and general impact on the immediate and local plan was limited, but on the other, the workers in this sector were inevitably compelled to reflect on the use and validity of the concepts and methodologies of which they were bearers; and this quite apart from the local context, and the claims of immediate globality of action.

(b) as a consequence, the deeper need for an intervention planning and for a stimulus to participation (which were at the basis of that reformist attitude we mentioned before, and at the same time the deeper motivation for accepting the use of such methodologies) was extended far beyond the territorial boundaries of the community, directly to society as a whole, and to the large number of structures and functions that are its component parts.²⁶

5.2. *Research Activities*

Research activities are, as we have seen, amongst the activities increased during the life of the projects. The main reason for this particular attention is the importance attributed to them by the operators themselves especially

on the part of those who felt very strongly about the global character of intervention.²⁷ The need at the beginning stage for research on the various aspects of social, economic and cultural life of the areas in which they operated, derived from the necessity of integrating or even producing in the first place, data that could guide the intervention action. This was due to the difficulty of finding such data in official publications, which are seldom complete and up to date, and even less so concerning "marginal" areas, and phenomena considered "shameful".²⁸ To this must be added that the projects as they developed in communities defined according to many variables (of which the institutional level was only one), worked in areas that did not exactly coincide with administrative subdivisions.

Research, on the other hand, did not concern only the initial stage of first contact with the area, nor did it have for its object only the production of data in the traditional economic, social and anthropological terms. Particularly through "participant research", and especially in some projects, it became one of the main activities, in response to two fundamental demands:

- (a) the need to stimulate the participation of the local leaders and of the population in becoming aware "from the inside", but in rational terms, of the community problems and possible solutions;
- (b) the need for a continuous control on the activities undertaken and on their partial results, so as to improve techniques and methodologies of intervention and verify the hypotheses (so called *self-analysis*).

It is interesting to observe that this way of conducting research (though of course some use was also made of specialists for the study of definite problems) in reality was limited by two factors. In the first place, "participant research" was used (if at all) only as a fundamental intervention technique by the "social" operators, while the "technical" ones appeared to prefer the traditional types of "specialist" analysis. Secondly, as far as the differences between projects are concerned, participant research was used in its double aspect of self-analysis and stimulus to participation, only by those projects that we described as "democratic" (cfr. 4.2 and 4.3), while it was in fact avoided by the projects we called "bureaucratic" (as contradictory with the logic of efficiency, according to which there are quicker methods both of data production and verification of hypotheses) as well as by the "charismatic" ones (as contradictory with the logic of personal creativeness and representativity of the charismatic leader²⁹).

These two factors limiting the use of the instrument "participant research", together with the difficulties met with in general when looking for a correct approach and for a solution to the problem of the relationship between research and intervention, are doubly interesting.

First of all, the fact that the "social" operators almost exclusively conducted research — either on their own, or through specialists called in by them — confirms the existence of the already mentioned problem of coordinating the various intervention sectors throughout the lifetime of the project. Secondly, it shows this problem, in a particularly acute form, exactly because research occupies a special place amongst the various activities, as being the least "sectorial", and therefore the one activity where the planned and integrated character of intervention should show with particular evidence.

We see therefore that even in dealing with the subject of research, we meet with the same elements of crisis, existing in the projects and developing increasingly as the projects themselves grew and developed.

Though we cannot offer in this study a complete documentation on this point, we also think that research developments can be considered not only as symptoms of an underlying crisis, but also as agents and elements contributing to the crisis itself. This is connected with the function of research, which — as Hytten very rightly points out — must be planned as a strategy, as it must enable us to develop genetic and historical explanations of the phenomena under study, in order to be able to assess correctly the current situation and to predict its possible future evolution.

Research then, tends to highlight the crucial problems of the area in question, making explicit the multifarious connections (causal and historical) with the level and process of development of society at large. In this way, work at a local scale acquires a new meaning: and particularly to the eyes of the most sensitive operators, it increasingly appears as a partial experiment, whose main usefulness is the experimentation with specific intervention techniques, as a first step toward national development planning, and whose success is largely dependent — both on a logical and on a factual plane — on a general evolution in that direction.

5.3. *The Operators*

Most of our observations on this subject are already implicit in what we previously said. In order to give a more precise meaning to Table 4, particularly where the relative importance of some sectors is concerned, we have tried to present in the following table the use of different operators in the projects under study.

As we can see, the highest score is reached, in this order, by researchers, teachers, (under which term we include teachers and instructors at various levels, and nursery school teachers), social workers and technical agricultural experts. We must add that it would be wrong to conclude from this table on the types of staff used, that all these different types of staff were used at the same time. It would in fact be very interesting to have a more

Table 5. Staff Employed by the Projects

	Social Workers	Agricult. Experts	Home Economics Advisers	Adult Educators	School and Nursery Sch. Teachers	Medical Staff	Cultural Activities Staff	Researchers(Econ., sociolog., etc.)	Engineers, Surveyors, Draughtsmen	Experts in Artisan Activ. and Industries	Trade Union Advisers	Administrative Staff
Abruzzi	x	x		x	x			x	x			x
Avigliano	x	x		x	x			x		x		
Borgo a M.		x	x									
CECAT		x	x	x	x			x				x
Comunità	x				x		x	x			x	x
Molise	x	x	x	x	x			x	x			
Palma di M.	x				x	x		x				x
Partinico	x	x	x	x	x	x		x				x
Sardinia	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x		x

circumstantial analysis of the various stages at which the various types succeeded each other, which would tell us a great deal on the dynamics of the projects; unfortunately, in the greatest number of cases we have not enough material available.

It is however possible from this material to gather quite an amount of information on the professional role of the various operators and on the problems concerning them, as well as on the relationships between different operators.

As we have seen, the projects' development was accompanied by a characteristic evolution on two lines: the operators left the community aside, to concentrate on the one side on the specific sectorial problems met locally, and on the other to derive from them general propositions significant only at the level of society at large. The effects of this development however, did not involve in the same measure and with the same intensity all the various types of operators. Some of the reasons for this may have been contingent to the particular situations and not susceptible of generalization, but one at least we think may profitably be discussed, i.e. the one concerning the degree of institutionalization of the professions in question, and the greater or lesser specificity of their tasks. This may be more evident, if we consider the effect of the lack of integration of the various types of work in a perspective whose focus is on the community, for the different sectors, in terms of "deviation" from the initial programs.

Again using some concrete examples, the engineer, the agricultural expert, the agricultural technician, the teacher, the instructor will suffer professionally from a lack of integration between their own work and the work of other specialists, only to the extent that they have missed an occasion to enrich their professional lives; but this lack of interdisciplinary approach will in no way question, for them, the body of knowledge, information and experience that is at the basis of their profession.

Moreover, and this is important, these roles have no need to justify to outsiders their own existence and their way of working; on the contrary, even in the eyes of these non-professionals, the roles are all the more justified the closer they are to usual and codified behaviours.

Without any doubts, an engineer that did subordinate his every calculation to discussions with the future tenants of the houses, or a teacher that submitted all his study programs to a discussion with his pupils, or an agricultural expert that left it to the farmers to take decisions on the best cultural techniques would appear much less normal than any of these professionals who would rely on his competence to claim the right and the power to decide in his own specific field, leaving to the "consumers" at most a function of control of the results.

Things however are different for the social workers involved in the projects, and this seems to depend mainly on two factors: on the one side, the awareness of being not so much the depositaries of a body of knowledge and competence already codified, but rather pioneers and experimenters, at the same time researchers and operators, of a new way of conceiving and approaching development problems; on the other hand by the very marked influence of personal characteristics and individual preferences in those social workers who decide for community development as their chosen field.

It is then natural that the lack of integration of the activity sectors in community work, and the consequent withdrawal of each professional within the limits of his discipline, affects this type of operators as if it meant a full reexamination of their own tasks, as well as creating in them a personal crisis.

This situation produced, within the projects, various kinds of conflicts: ³⁰

- (a) within the group of social workers themselves, between those who tended to accept the situation that had come into being, by restricting their own action to strictly welfare and routine tasks, and those who tended to oppose it, by re-stating the need for a global intervention and for keeping faith with the objective of participation and who underlined the risk of bureaucratic involution present in the other choice;

- (b) between social workers and other operators, particularly the ones of the technical sectors, who were accused of a professional narrow-mindedness, and of bureaucratic authoritarianism in the relationships with the people of the community;
- (c) between social workers, and in general direct contact operators, and the higher levels of the "vertical organization", who were disapproved because of the lack of a detailed planning of the activities capable of helping effectively the inter-sectorial integration, and because of their inability to persuade everybody that such an action would mean a valorization and not a depreciation of the single disciplines.³¹

These types of conflict appeared in different forms in the different projects; some were deeply involved in them, some barely touched by them. Even the solutions adopted to check them have been quite different according to the various structures of the projects. What can be said on the basis of the available documents, is that until now this question, together with the one concerning autonomy, and with which this one is closely linked, constitutes the main contradiction, fundamentally unresolved, of all community projects. It is quite obvious that this situation also presents new problems to educators responsible for training the various types of operators, and also to administrators who might in future undertake similar activities, and will have to establish relationships with outside agencies.

5.4. *Relationships between the Projects and the Communities*

We should now at least glance briefly to the practical problems, because of which all the conflicts and contradiction we mentioned did in fact arise — the problems concerning the relationship between projects and the socio-economic context where they operated.

The initial programs tended to highlight two main principles, to be followed in the relationship with the community members: *respect* for local institutional and traditional structures, and *participation* of the people to the work aiming at the modification of those structures, without altering those characteristics that were still valid and genuine.

For this purpose, some lines of action had been suggested, as "methodological indications" as well as "provisional aims". With some difference from project to project, the ones that seem to be present almost everywhere are: the development of *neighbourhood centres* in the community; individuation and involvement of *leaders*; *surveys*.

But two main difficulties had to be faced, in actual practice, by this initial course of action (we mentioned it in part, in 2.5., and in 5.2.):

- (1) For the most part, the operators had a training which was insufficient to allow them to establish a truly new relationship with the people in the community; as we have said, this meant rediscussing again one's own *technical role*, and the power attributed to it on a *social level*.
- (2) There was also a practical difficulty, of expressing in practical and precise terms the dynamic, but balanced, relationship aimed at between innovation and respect for the community: this is equivalent to say that it was difficult to define the point beyond which the stimulus action of the project, would transform itself in coercion even with all good intentions.

We must observe here that the attempts made during the lifetime of the projects to present the work with the leaders, the development of neighborhood centres and the surveys as solutions to some of the fundamental problems, do not appear very convincing, as they are internally conflicting.

It is obvious in fact, that the simple indication of the instruments to use, is not in itself enough to define how they could be used, while it can be more than sufficient to generate conflicts amongst the people who should use them.

This is what in fact happened, as a consequence of the difficulties we have mentioned: the conceptual problems of the projects seem to revolve around an alternative, which should never have been present in the light of the programmatic statements: the alternative between the logic of *participation* and the logic of *efficiency*.

As we have seen, this contraposition (which is quite false, according to the initial plans) contributed to the creation of difficulties and conflicts in all the projects both in a vertical direction (between managerial roles and roles involving direct contact with the community people) and in general, in the relationship between projects and financing agencies.

But more than that, it caused the introduction of a number of heterogeneous criteria of behaviour in the relationship with the people, limiting in this way the communication between people and operators, and making it more difficult to compare results of different sectors — but most of all, leading to a predominance of the old and traditional criterion of efficiency, with all the risks of bureaucratization that it implies, particularly when combined with the "natural" limits of the territorial community.

6. Some Conclusions

The analysis we have conducted in this study is no doubt fragmentary and incomplete; as we said in the beginning, it was only meant as an attempt to explore some of the themes present in the documentary material of the Sorrento Conference.

We still think that it may be worth while to recall some observations, in the way of a conclusion, with the hope that they may be taken up again and re-examined with greater competence and more appropriate critical and technical instruments.

In the first place we may observe that the choice of the period of three years 1964-66, taken in the beginning as the conclusive limit in time for all projects, seems to have been confirmed as a reasonable choice in this study: all the projects considered seem to have followed a very similar course — if not in the succession of events, at least in the basic problems met and in the difficulties they run into.

The distinction between projects finished with and projects still in existence appears therefore not a useful one; the more so, as in some of the latter some initiatives have already been started, that show how the past experiences have been reconsidered and revised.

It is now possible to see more clearly the general type of choices that would have to be faced by whoever wanted to start thinking about the future of this operational sector, on the basis of fifteen years' experiences.

This order of choices can be evaluated according to two separate criteria.

The first criterion is derived directly from the preceding analysis of the concept of community used to define the intervention field. Using this criterion, there are two practical possibilities of development for future projects:

1. *To keep the socio-territorial definition of community:* the meaning of this choice, as can be deduced from all that we have said, is to give up any claim to a global intervention, at least to the extent to which this global intervention is founded — both at a methodological level and at the level of objectives to be reached — on the concept of *participation*, in its wider meaning.

It is not by chance that the projects for which the contradictions described in the previous pages were more serious, were also the projects that insisted the most on this concept; while the projects more clearly centered on sectorial technical intervention hardly met at all the problem of the validity of spacial delimitations.

This first alternative, therefore, implies a clear choice of role, which coincides essentially with the approach we defined "centered on technical assistance" and "focused": the work would then consist in the individuation, study and attempt to solve one or more sectorial problems which appear soluble on a local scale.

2. *To reject the socio-territorial definition of community* as exceedingly restrictive in relation to the problems one wants to solve, and to the type of approach one means to adopt. This means the choice of a role which

coincides roughly with the approaches we have described as "generalized" and "intermediate", with one important variation, which consists in opting explicitly for the technical-political outlook. This is because there is now a need to give priority to an analysis of the structures and the evolutionary trends of our particular society, though keeping the emphasis on operational needs and in particular, on methodological problems. Another reason for choosing this alternative, is that it offers the possibility of further clarifying the consistently reformist limitations of this approach, so as to avoid the conflicts generated in the past amongst the operators by the contradiction existing between the role played and the individual motivations for its choice.

The second criterion we suggest is linked with the issue of the kind of relationship one wants to establish between projects and national planning.

Here again there are two alternatives, which coincide to a large extent with the previous ones:

1. *The choice of a subordinate and sectorial role, clearly supplementary*, where the use of certain techniques is directed mainly to become a substitute for public and/or private initiatives, in sectors which have been left out of major investments' concentration, and in particular in the so called "marginal areas" of development.

It is quite clear that such a choice, even if it did consider participation, would not imply any longer (because of its own assumptions) an interdependence between increase in participation and increase in decision making power, which had been implied by the projects we have considered.

2. *The choice of a stimulus role*, definitely not directed to integrate possible deficiencies or to repair the effects of the inevitable discriminations occurring within the national and regional development plans, but rather to state explicitly the problems of a true integration in the work of the various intervention sectors, and of a greater flexibility of the instruments — both at a methodological level and at the level of choice of contents.

The specific contribution that this reconsideration of past experiences might give, in this last perspective, is to highlight the objective of citizens' participation in the various circumstances and at the different levels at which they are involved in this society of ours: public administration, school, trade unions, services etc. Fundamentally of course the main idea is that of avoiding to make the socio-cultural interventions the ideology-maker on the one hand, and the stop-gap on the other, of economic intervention, but — ideally — to help any form of socio-cultural intervention to comprise the latter, as part of itself.

Beyond these prospects, that we tried to describe as clearly as we could, we cannot think of any other way that would not at the same time radically negate the basis itself of the society we live in.

GIOVANNI MOTTURA

*Centro Specializzazione e Ricerche
Economico-agrarie per il Mezzogiorno,
Portici (Napoli)*

Notes

¹ A more thorough discussion on this subject can be found in the study of G. A. MARSELLI, published in a different part of this volume.

² From now on, we will simplify the names of the different projects as follows: Abruzzi, Avigliano, Borgo a M., CECAT, Comunità, Molise, Palma, Partinico, Sardinia.

³ This particular weight given to the local context, together with a special interest for the methodological and technical aspects of the intervention, is probably the reason for considering these three projects, and *particularly the first and the third* as the most typical examples of community development projects, at least judging from the programmatic documents.

⁴ We refer here to some positions taken by participants to the Sorrento Conference, which — though understandable because of the controversies on the present situation, and on future prospects — presented the community development experiences in a rather unrealistic light, particularly from an ideological point of view.

⁵ Of course if we only consider the programmatic declarations, things are much simpler than what they really were in reality. On the other hand, the scheme that follows may be more specified later. We can only hope that sometimes in the future, somebody qualified for this work will be able to publish the documents (recordings of interviews, meetings, group discussions; records, official memoranda etc.) produced by the various operators at different stages of work, which otherwise may be forgotten

or lost. We feel that such a work would probably be a much better teaching text than many now in use in Schools of Social Work.

⁶ We must not forget (even if we cannot pursue this subject in this study) the ethical and social values attributed to this relationship; it is not by chance that quite often the solution suggested loses — even in the eyes of the persons advancing it — the character of “rational” hypothesis (i.e. not incompatible with the structures of *this* socio-economic system, which has reached *this* development level), to acquire more or less consciously the character of an optimal model, socially and morally, of the citizen-society relationship.

⁷ This problem of enriching the institutional structure of the community, or to establish more firmly the realizations of the project by institutionalizing them, is present in different forms in all the projects. This fact, where the contacts with formal local leaders were concerned (excepting from this category the officials belonging to administrations of a higher level than the “comune”, as the “province” or the “region”) led to complicated problems, as not only the operators’ work was seen often as a perturbation of the usual routine, but — even more dangerous — the risk could be vaguely seen of starting a process which could not be controlled later through political means (i.e. a turnover of leadership).

It is however interesting that in all those cases where it was possible to establish an organic connection with local administrators, in view of planning together measures to stimulate development processes, this led almost inevitably to push the territorial-administrative local structure towards forms of partnership that would ensure the possibility of coordinating action on a larger basis.

⁸ We must remember that at this stage of analysis we are not dealing yet with the question of how much the programmatic declarations did coincide with the practical realization of the projects.

⁹ It is odd that, as far as the writer is aware, nobody has ever remarked on the analogy between this outlook and the basis of many prejudices existing in the whole system against the poorer areas, though these prejudices have been attacked many times by the sponsors and operators of the projects. The “scientific” version of this type of prejudices is that the *origin* of the under-development of these areas is to be found in the “lack of entrepreneurial spirit”.

¹⁰ In general this approach leads to consider the intervention of society (i.e. of the State) at the local level, almost solely as the provision of services indispensable to the development of local initiatives.

¹¹ Similar examples of the salvaging of traditional artisan activities in highly industrialized societies can be found in the Scandinavian States.

¹² From this point of view, the community development projects have contributed very much to the diffusion and clarification of the concept of *planning*. We must point out, however, that while this correlation has always been clearly stated by the social operators where the economic intervention was concerned, the critical approach deriving from it has never been applied as consistently in the case of purely socio-cultural interventions.

¹³ Where this problem, and other similar issues, are concerned, see the brilliant study by ALESSANDRO PIZZORNO, “Amoral familism and historical marginality”, *International Review of Community Development*, n. 15-16, 1966 and *Quaderni di Sociologia*, XVI, July 1967.

¹⁴ With the term "reformism", we mean here the attitudes and behaviours based on the conviction that it is possible to modify social structures through successive sectorial improvements, without (or independently from) breaking away in a clear cut fashion from the institutional system one intends to modify. This breaking away is the phenomenon currently called "revolution", while it is only an intermediate stage of revolution proper.

¹⁵ The considerations that follow are largely based on the study of synthesis on the projects, presented by EMMA MORIN to the Sorrento Conference (mimeo), pgf. 2.1 pp. 9-14.

¹⁶ "The organizational abilities, the tension, the dynamic and aggressive qualities which belong to great industrial organizations cannot... usefully be confined to the production of goods and the organization of the productive factors;... In particular, the social and cultural problems capable of stopping the country's development at backward civilization levels and economic conditions, are of immediate concern and responsibility to the great enterprise, if a long term view is taken, just as much as the organizational efficiency of the sales system, or the technological quality of the goods produced" (see F. SPANTIGATI, "Introduzione", special issue of *Centro Sociale* dedicated to the Avigliano project, XII, 57-60, 1964, p. 4).

¹⁷ As far as CECAT is concerned as well as Abruzzi, it is on the contrary quite obvious that some of the most arduous problems met during the lifetime of the projects had their origin precisely in this concern. Quite apart from the actual results, it is quite clear that many of those problems have not yet found a satisfactory solution either at a practical or at a methodological level.

¹⁸ Obviously this is the other side of the coin, in respect of the problem of autonomy. But it is necessary to look at it, in order to have a complete picture.

¹⁹ The particular "esprit de corps" which developed amongst some of the operators, is probably due to those characteristics, at least in part; if it facilitated in many ways the diffusion of these "democratic" relationships, on the other hand it also became a source of difficulties, as we shall see later.

²⁰ We must stress also the fact that in many instances in which a programmatic intention did not result in undertaking a particular work, the simple reason for it was that it was practically impossible to do so, due to lack of time (premature end of the project), lack of operators, lack of money, or all these things together. Keeping this in mind, it might be possible through a more thorough analysis, to reduce these cases to two main types of general conditioning: the one concerning the relationships with outside agencies, and the other concerning the relationships with the environment in which the action took place.

²¹ For instance a malfunctioning of some services or institutions, or their absence, or else the failure in the training of certain kinds of technical specialized workers whereby they are unable to work correctly and without frictions in their proper field, within the social context where they operate etc.

²² We might remind the reader that by *territorial* definition we mean here a definition of the project's tasks having as a primary framework a territorial area, rather than, e.g. an institutional area, or a sectorial one — both in structural and functional terms.

²³ Find a balance can mean here either discovering it in the actual situation, or else provoking it: this depends on whether the community is conceived as an

already existing space in which one operates, or as the objective to be reached by the project (see 2.4.).

²⁴ The different ways of solving this problem should be analyzed more carefully. A possible scheme for this study might well start from the three types of organizational models (bureaucratic, democratic and charismatic) we mentioned in 4.3.

²⁵ Particularly strong amongst the people who did participate in the projects is the tendency to (or the temptation to) explain away the facts we are discussing in terms of "lack of organization", or else of external obstacles and difficulties. We think that on the basis of our observations, it can be maintained that though these factors did have their importance, they do nothing to discredit our basic diagnosis but on the contrary they confirm it: i.e. that there was a weakness in the theoretical assumptions at the basis of the whole construction.

²⁶ This tendency is in fact — as we suggested in the foreword — the specific link between the community development experiences, and the trends towards planning that have started in Italy in the last few years. We must observe that this tendency, however, is not present equally amongst the operators of the various projects, whether still in existence or not. To reach such an awareness seems to us basic to the possible resumption of these experiences, and it implies a great deal of criticism and self-criticism.

²⁷ For this statement too, we have used EMMA MORIN, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-24. In those pages we also found quoted: E. HYTTEN, "Un lavoro per lo sviluppo in Sicilia Occidentale: il Centro Studi e Iniziative per la Piena Occupazione", *La Rivista di Servizio Sociale*, n. 3, 1963; ANGELA ZUCCONI, "Primi lineamenti del programma di lavoro del Progetto pilota per l'Abruzzo", *Centro Sociale*, n. 22-23, 1958.

²⁸ A typical case of deliberate misinformation, linked to prejudices based on commonly accepted values, is the lack of accuracy *by defect* of the data given by the "comune" on emigration; the true data were ascertained without any doubt for instance in Abruzzi, during a number of surveys carried out by the project.

²⁹ We must stress again that (a) the terms used to indicate the three groups do not imply any value judgement; (b) it would be absolutely incorrect to attribute the responsibility for the choice of method in the projects to the individual outlook or training of the operators involved. The problem is, on the contrary, to understand in a more precise way the endogenous and exogenous factors that conditioned their choices in a large measure. We will deal with this subject in the following pages.

³⁰ In projects like Palma and Partinico, where the presence of volunteers had a remarkable weight, these conflicts appeared in the form of difficulties (sometimes explosions!) in the relationships between volunteers and "professionals" with a regular salary. This seems to confirm our hypothesis that where social workers are concerned, even in cases where they were regularly employed and paid, there is a large margin of a subjective "volunteer" attitude, present in the community branch of the profession. On the other hand, from the point of view of the community projects, we think it's obvious that the malfunctioning due to this situation cannot be solved by "professionalizing" further the role of social workers. In fact, in this way one would gradually reach a greater "depersonalization" of this function; this is a tendency of the general socio-economic system to reduce the risk that certain functions might confer some personal power to the people who undertake them, which would prevent a turnover. On the other hand, in order to ensure a better

functioning of "integrated" projects at different levels, it would be necessary to make an effort to train, in special courses, a different type of "technical" operators, sensitive to the social issues linked with the technical problems they have to solve, and prepared professionally to understand the implications of such issues in the significant values for the solutions they may adopt.

³¹ It is not by chance that the most severe criticisms, at least from some sectors of the projects, point exactly to this issue: they tend to attribute this lack to a definite political will to put obstacles in the way of experiments in planning making use of the population's participation. Whether or not these criticisms are justified, they appear important to understand the further developments of the doctrines of community development. And though it may seem a paradox, it looks almost certain that those criticisms — based on the need to affirm the principle of participation on a *local scale* — have been the starting point for the new considerations that are now rejecting, even on a conceptual level, the territorial definition of community.