

## TRUST, CLIENTELISM AND STATE INTERVENTION IN DISASTER RELIEF POLICY: THE CASE OF SOUTHERN ITALY

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**Abstract:** The aim of this article is to describe the consequences of state intervention at the local level after a destructive earthquake hit the south of Italy in 1980. The kind of intervention adopted, the amount of financial investment and the way in which it was distributed affected the social and economic equilibrium of the local community in terms of perceptions of trust, patronage and effects on development.

**Key words:** disaster relief; Southern Italy; clientelism; trust.

The aim of this article is to describe the consequences of state intervention at the local level, after a destructive earthquake. The kind of intervention adopted, the amount of financial investment and its distribution affected the equilibrium of the local community. Moreover, the new perceptions of injustice and inequality led to lower levels of trust with negative consequences for development.

It was November 23 in 1980 when the earthquake struck two southern Italian regions, Campania and Basilicata, for 90 seconds with a magnitude of 6.9 on the Richter Scale killing 2,753 people, injuring 8,848 and making 400,000 homeless. This event led to the implementation of new Italian legislation concerning reconstruction and post-disaster development intervention, and to the creation of a new institution: the Italian Civil Protection Department.

The research<sup>1</sup> was conducted in a small village in the province of Avellino, where the earthquake caused the deaths of 62 inhabitants and made 2,743 homeless due to the damage caused and the collapse of 70 per cent of all buildings.

In response to the enormous levels of destruction, the village took part in a reconstruction plan adopted by the state in accordance with intervention law no. 219 of

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1980. Following that date, it and the other communities struck by the earthquake received €32,363,593,779 for reconstruction and industrial development (Osservatorio Permanente sul Dopo Sisma, 2010).

As I will show in this article, perceptions of trust and the consequent impact on social and economic development are fundamental factors in explaining the intervention and the consequences.

The methodology used is typical of anthropological research: participant observation, structured and unstructured interviews and a survey. The participant observation (8 months, from November 2010 to June 2011) has been particularly important in highlighting relationships, interactions and mechanisms among the community members. In the second phase of the field research, a questionnaire distributed to 10% of the total population (365 interviewees) was useful not only in terms of the quantitative analysis but also in going into depth on aspects that emerged during the interviews.

## Theoretical background

I arrived in the area struck by the 1980 earthquake motivated by a personal curiosity about social and political change in a small village in Southern Italy, Caposele. The subject of my study was perceptions of trust the inhabitants had of other people and of the local and national institutions.

The aim was to seek answers to the following questions: how did state funds for reconstruction affect the community in terms of perceptions of trust and patronage? Are the inhabitants able to fight for the needs of the community today? Do they participate in the social life? Moreover, my attempt is also to apply some of the theoretical background to the “underdevelopment” and the “amoral familism” thesis suggested by Banfield to describe the Southern Italian context.

Banfield's study (2006) and that of Putnam (1994) are the most well-known publications on the political, social and economic differences between North and South Italy. Banfield's book describes the political behavior of a Southern Italian community lacking moral sanctions outside the nuclear family and unable to cooperate beyond it. The moral principle of this society is to “Maximize the material, short-run advantage of the nuclear family; assume that all others will do likewise” (2006, 101). The author refers to this behavior as amoral familism and describes it as an *ethos* belonging to the cultural basis of that society. The familist does not care about public problems or activities that are in the interest of the community; he is a distrustful voter and does not believe in political parties since they are corrupt. Therefore it is not the lack of natural resources or the local conditions that create a backward society; the reason is to be found in the *ethos*.

Putnam's study, like Banfield's, suggests that there is a cultural and historical explanation for the Southern condition in Italy. The starting point is that history shapes political institutions and they act in different ways according to the social context in which they are located, linking institutional efficiency with the civic community. The roots of this behavior can be found in the Italian history of the medieval communes in the North, and the Norman feudal monarchy in the South. This relates to autonomy and political involvement versus hierarchical and centralized power, cooperation versus patronage.

Banfield's work has been strongly criticized. Colombis (1976) underlines that the methodology used in the author's questionnaire was misleading: the interviewee could only choose between a non familialistic solution and a familialistic one, he could not opt, for example, for a natural attachment to the family; Piselli (1981) states that Banfield did not consider other important relationships in Southern communities such as friendship, kinship or neighborhood relations; Davis (1970) highlights weaknesses in the analysis of social aspects; Silverman (1968) does not accept the moral explanation in dealing with social structures and Sciolla (1997) criticizes the author's suggestion that Montegrano's model is representative of the whole of the South of Italy.

In this paper I wish to analyze the effects of state intervention in terms of trust building and integrity. I will argue that in this case the familialistic behavior is not linked to an ethos, as Banfield indicated, but to the consequences of the intervention of the national government. The heavy involvement of the state affects perceptions of corruption and social capital: the more a state interferes, the lower the social capital and the higher the level of corruption<sup>2</sup> (Coleman 1994, Montinola and Jackman 2002).

Moreover, if we suppose that "an individual's civic morality is rooted in the general belief that others are trustworthy, and this belief is closely linked to the experience of interactions with fellow citizens" (Letki 2006, 308), we might better understand the effects of intervention programs following a disaster. In fact, following the financial intervention, the community members started to act on an individual basis, falling out of the habit of perceiving themselves as a group. As Coleman (1994) states, wealth and state aid, in addition to other factors, make people less dependent on one another and decrease the level of social capital.

Trust is supposed to be a strategy for achieving economic, social and political efficiency (Fukuyama 1995; Putnam 1994; Garfinkel 1963), connecting it to civic engagement but there is no agreement on what makes citizens trust (Letki 2006) and the anthropological literature gives little insight into how trust comes about or what influences perception levels. Nowadays trust is investigated at a multidisciplinary level and this includes descriptions of the role of actors, and the outcomes and causes of trust. An increasing number of social scientists are interested in trust as an important element for economic growth. According to Rothstein and Uslaner (2005) the number of articles published in scientific journals or abstracts where "trust" is a keyword increased from 129 to 1,956 between 1990 and 2005 and, if we are to add the word growth, then the increase is from 1 to 49 articles.

Rothstein and Uslaner (*ibid.*, 44) argue that "the roots of generalized trust in a society lie in a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities". The authors believe that equality and honesty in government stand at the beginning of the causal chain. In particular, Uslaner (2000) states that economic inequality is a strong predictor of generalized trust.

In this paper I will explain how an important public measure that aimed to redistribute opportunities in a poor region following a natural disaster has, on the contrary, led to inequity causing a breakdown of community ties and a fall in levels of trust. Moreover due to the poor accountability of the local administration at a time of profound reconstruction, the outcome

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<sup>2</sup> In this case, in describing the allocation of public funds, I will refer to patronage in the sense that Gellner does, as: "a system, a style, a moral climate. [...] An ethos: people know that is a way of doing things, among others." (1977, 3)

not only increased amoral familialistic tendencies and worsening local government performance but eventually fed into patronage.

### A decade before the disaster

The three provinces worst hit by the earthquake were Avellino (103 villages), Salerno (66 villages) and Potenza (45 villages). In 36 of the villages at the epicenter 20,000 apartments and buildings were destroyed. Of the communities hit by the disaster, I chose to carry out my research in Caposele (AV) for several reasons. First of all a local association has published a review since 1973; this kind of continuity with the past enabled me to reconstruct the community's history before and after the disaster. Moreover, I could interview people who had played an important role in the reconstruction period (village mayors, politicians, the priest, technicians and engineers). Finally, since the post-earthquake reconstruction program involved rebuilding the existing sites but also an enlargement of the inhabited area, it was interesting to understand the effects of this dual development.

In the 1970s the area struck by the disaster was agriculture-based and extremely poor with high levels of emigration. The second and third sector workers, together with those who had benefitted from the emigrants' income, represented the consumer pool for the richer Northern Italian regions.

At that time, Caposele was a typical village in an Apennine valley and its inhabitants lived a rural life following the rhythm of nature. Alongside the agriculture a craft sector was developing.

In 1971 there were officially 4,185 residents and this decreased to 4,005 in 1980, while those who in fact resided in the village changed from 3,625 to 3,478. Unlike other nearby villages, Caposele had a lower emigration rate due to religious tourism in the hamlet of Materdomini, where there was a sanctuary. A visitor boom in the 1970s led to an increase in the construction industry to the detriment of agriculture.

**Table 1.** Distribution of labor force by occupation sector

	First sector	Manufacturing industry	Construction industry, system installation	Commerce	Transport	Services	Public Administration	Entrepreneurs
Census 1971 <sup>3</sup>	804 <sup>4</sup>	159	423	135	27	76	98	28 (4 in the second sector)
Census 1981 <sup>5</sup>	466 <sup>6</sup>	90	486	160	35	162	48	18 (2 in the second, 1 in the first sector)

<sup>3</sup> ISTAT, 11° censimento della popolazione e delle abitazioni. Roma, 1971.

<sup>4</sup> Of whom 753 were self-employed.

<sup>5</sup> ISTAT, 12° censimento della popolazione e delle abitazioni. Roma, 1981.

<sup>6</sup> Of whom 299 were self-employed.

Over the same decade the number of families increased and the size of the family unit became smaller, while the birth rate decreased and the population aged.

**Table 2.** Population and age ranges

	Residents (official)	Residents (actual)	Families	+7 members	Age ranges			
					0-14	15- 24	25-64	+65
Census 1971	4185	3625	1139	87	1159	733	1884	409
Census 1981	4005	3478	1260	30	949	675	1856	525

Cultural and social activities in Caposele flourished due in part to improvements in the education levels of the population: the number of illiterate people fell from 467 to 326, while the number of graduates doubled, totaling 62 in 1981, and the number of students obtaining a diploma increased by 70.

In 1973 a tourist association and magazine were founded. There was a significant amount of community-level political activities with 300 members in the Communist Party, 120 in the Christian Democracy Party and 100 in the Italian Socialist Party; each of them had youth movements and unions.

### **The rules regarding state intervention**

During the months that followed the events of 23 November, 1980, the opportunity to begin again and see the disaster as a sort of redemption for the southern regions began to gain currency.

The legislative intervention was in fact aimed not only at rapid reconstruction but also at developing the area hit by the earthquake. Development meant that a large amount of public money was to be invested in the creation of industries, infrastructure, public works and services in order to provide employment. The idea was to organize the industrial district in such a way that external industries would be located within the intervention area, thus breaking with the pre-existing equilibrium and making the development a success. For this reason there were no limits on investment nor on the type of industry to be established.

The intervention program is described in law no. 219, art. 32 and it includes infrastructure and non-refundable grants for external beneficiary industries (75 per cent of the overall investment).

From 1985 to 1994 a large number of warehouses were built in the area along with 57 industries (Osservatorio Permanente sul Dopo-Sisma), but not all were a success, especially those that were not well-known on the national or international market.

Later, a political scandal, known as *Irpiniaagate*, emerged after a parliamentary enquiry into appropriate use of public money and the incident meant that funds were no longer distributed. Moreover with Italy's EU accession other rules and obligations had to be respected and the new legislation had to be revised.

There is widespread opinion that the investment in industrial districts was a failure, as confirmed by the parliamentary commission of enquiry in 1991, because of the location

and the number of industries: 20 districts were chosen that did not have a defined project encompassing a development strategy based on real local opportunities; some industries were located down on the valley floor near the rivers ignoring the environmental constraints; industries were concentrated in only five areas that had better communication links; the type of industry was not linked to the agricultural and craft identities of the area and, what is more, local workers received no training. For all these reasons it seemed that the idea was to delocalize and invest in new machinery rather than create a new occupational and business class capable of improving southern economic conditions.

At the beginning the plan was to establish 255 industries with 13,805 employees. Today there are 168 industries with only 6,804 workers (Osservatorio Permanente sul Dopo-Sisma 2010).

Apart from the economic effects of government intervention, there were also significant social effects.

### **The reconstruction of Caposele**

Events during the reconstruction period did not proceed in a clear and linear manner. Reconstruction has an impact on the social and economic core and the changes are perceived once it has finished. It has been calculated that at the end of 2004 the administration of Caposele had received 106,904 million euros for the reconstruction and repair of 3,014 houses and public works. A local commission was established to evaluate and then finance the necessary housing project. At that point the project was transferred to the construction company. There were no real criteria which the commission used to allocate the funding, the distribution was often determined by the chronological order in which the project was presented to the local officials.

The first projects to be financed were those in rural areas because in the urban center the pre-reconstruction preparations had not yet commenced. Thus those who owned rural properties decided to abandon the village center in order to rebuild more rapidly. Moreover, given that buildings were not divided up in a systematic manner and the legal and technical difficulties involved in identifying property owners and measuring surfaces, work in the historical center was further delayed. For these reasons the administration had to reestablish adjoining properties such as blocks of flats but the reconstruction did not always respect previous owners' rights. This situation created discontent affecting interpersonal relationships.

Another important government intervention was that those owners living in inadequate conditions had the possibility to build larger houses at least 48 meters squared, 18 meters squared for each nuclear family member). Citizens who decided to make use of this right had to plan to reconstruct elsewhere (Piani di zona) because of the lack of space in the historical center, handing over their original property to the administration. These abandoned apartments become part of the aforementioned block of flats, easily rebuilt with clear legal and technical measurements. In 1980 several families had been living in cramped spaces and some still did not have toilets or running water. Indeed, more than a sixth of the inhabitants that lived in the historical center before the earthquake live in the new area today.

As one section of the population was relocated to the new developments, reconstruction meant changing the social geography: new places with new or no relationships. Rebuilding also signified economic change.

## Social and economic changes

*In those years, lots of people became builders, lots of small building companies were founded. There was work for everyone.<sup>7</sup>*

For the first time since 1951, the decade 1981-1991 saw the region of Irpinia stabilize in demographic terms with a population increase of 1 per cent. This trend was a consequence of the funding laws and governmental intervention vis-a-vis the reconstruction plan. But, after the chaotic phase, the feel good factor dissipated destroying the fragile economic structure that had emerged in the previous decade.

Caposele found itself in the same situation. In 1989, the village had 4,336 residents and 1,422 families, but over the course of only two years the population fell by 300 people. Comparing the data over the decade, we find that while the resident population remained stable (4,005 in 1981 and 4,026 in 1991), the number of permanent residents and families changed significantly: compared to 1981 there were 643 additional people and 100 additional families. The number of family members remained constant and the population did not seem to age particularly. Finally, the number of graduates remained stable and those who obtained a high school diploma increased by 170<sup>8</sup>.

In this decade, however, the economic structure of society changed.

The agricultural sector saw a great reduction in the number of workers (193) while other two sectors began to dominate: house building sector and house construction project. Law 219/81 was basically instrumental in the self-reconstruction because it recognized that the owners of the damaged buildings were the subject of this economic and social process. Since the owner decided to whom to turn to for the project and the construction of his house, a high demand for professionals in the field was required. The building sector dominates the local economy with 27.29 per cent of total workers and a new technical social class was born. In fact the number of small businesses and the self-employed increased from 18 in 1981 to 88 in 1991. Nonetheless, of the 13 enterprises carrying out private and public work only 4 were local, while the others were from other Italian regions. This was a consequence of the inexperience and the limited size of the new local firms.

The involvement of external companies is still a topic of conversation today:

*It would have been more sensible to allow local people work during the period when we lost everything.<sup>9</sup>*

*Outside companies came like predators! They used low quality materials so that they could increase their prices.<sup>10</sup>*

*People weren't interested in looking after us, they wanted money, there was a lot of work to be done.<sup>11</sup>*

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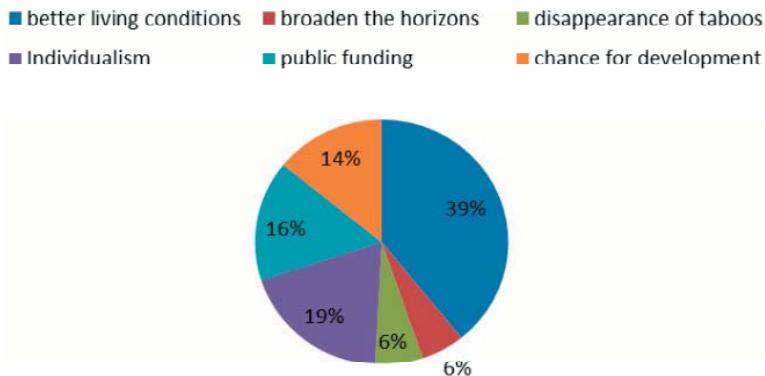
<sup>7</sup> A 68 year old man, 10 January 2011.

<sup>8</sup> ISTAT, 13° censimento della popolazione e delle abitazioni. Roma, 1991.

<sup>9</sup> A 57 year old man, 10 January 2011.

<sup>10</sup> A 44 year old man, 26 January 2011.

<sup>11</sup> A 67 year old man, 30 January 2011.



**Figure 1.** The most important aspect linked to the earthquake.

Of the technicians and engineers involved in the private and public work in Caposele, 33 was the total amount, one half were locals, young graduates who, by chance, acquired great responsibilities and high profits.

### Disaster as catastrophe or opportunity

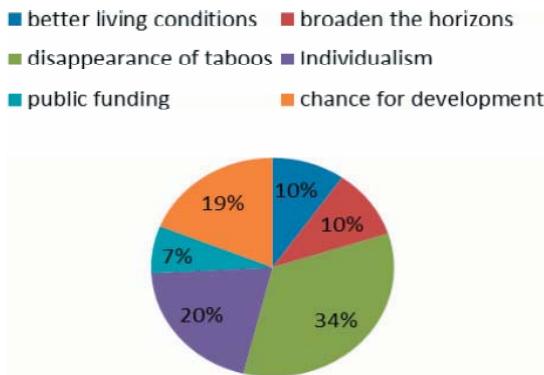
At the end of the fourth month of my stay in the community, I suggested that 360 inhabitants complete a questionnaire concerning the most important aspects that had come out during casual conversations. About 200 questionnaires were distributed by students to their families, while the rest were filled in in my presence. It was a useful way of focusing the interview on certain points.

In talking with local people, the six elements above emerged in relation to the earthquake (Figure 1). The majority of interviewees (39 per cent) believe that improvements to living conditions are the most important consequence of the disaster. Thanks to the reconstruction families could live in larger spaces and renovate old houses. Improvement does not necessarily mean modernity: only 49 per cent state that the reconstruction made it possible for the village to reach national living standards. About 19 per cent feel that the primary consequence is a tendency towards individualism.

*Before the earthquake we used to live like one big family, our house was the neighbourhood. We left the doors open and the neighbours could come in and give us vegetables. Now I tell my grandma to lock up.<sup>12</sup>*

Moreover, 16 per cent of those interviewed associate state funds with the tragedy, especially the unequal distribution that did not take into account citizens' needs. This was stated by 71 per cent while 9 per cent did not express this thought. And, according to 76 per

<sup>12</sup> A 40 year old woman, 30 May 2011.



**Figure 2.** The least important aspect linked to the earthquake.

cent of the interviewees, the lack of accountability of citizens on the local administration favoured this kind of behaviour.

*How could a citizen put a stop to this situation if he was involved in this mechanism? He might have lost some advantages.<sup>13</sup>*

This statement highlights the individualistic behaviour that marked the reconstruction period: everyone faced difficulties in trying to take immediate advantage of the reconstruction. At that moment the lack of control by the community and the local administration was convenient, but nowadays 96 per cent of the interviewees state that the administration must avoid being involved in corruption and denounce any form of corruption.

Finally, 14 per cent believe that the disaster could have been an opportunity for local development but it was open only to a few.

Then, I asked about the least important aspect relating to the earthquake (Figure 2). The majority (34 per cent) refer to the disappearance of taboos, behaviours that breaks moral rules shared by the community, such as adultery or being a single mother. This is a recollection of the period immediately following the event.

*People were happy to be alive and started living without inhibitions.<sup>14</sup>*

There is no mention of other immoral aspects in this part of the questionnaire. For example injustices and illegal behaviours were widespread but not referred to as morality.

Comparing the answers to the first two questions we see that individualism is currently perceived as both the most and the least important aspect. And those who put opportunities for development last (19 per cent) believe that the opportunity was lost.

<sup>13</sup> A 37 year old woman, 11 January 2011.

<sup>14</sup> A 40 year old man, 11 January 2011.

These contrasting opinions show that interpretations of the event depend on people's experiences. In fact the catastrophe is perceived in two different ways: the earthquake was both an opportunity for enrichment and a trauma for others. In other words, it meant the trauma of losing loved people and a home built through lots of sacrifice and having no right to compensation by the state and the material richness of those who had nothing: the fortunes of a new class and the craftiness of the new rich.

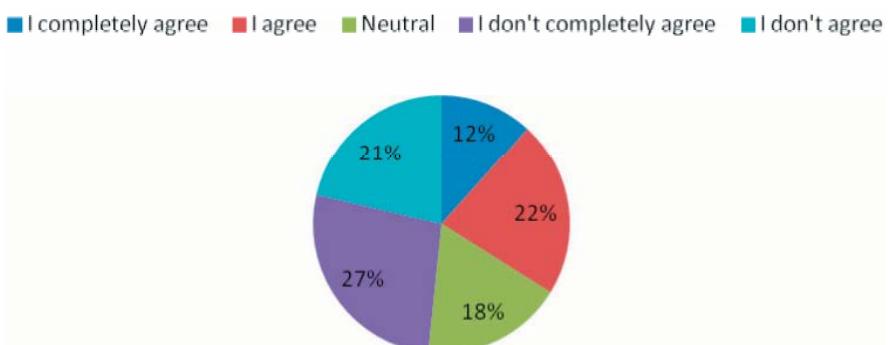
### Clientelism and social injustices

The reconstruction got off on the wrong foot. In order to be able to distribute a bigger amount of money for the reconstruction, in May 1981 the declared number of villages hit by the earthquake doubled in a Prime Minister's decree. The number of communities receiving funds totaled 687, of which more than 280 had suffered serious damage. Originally around 100,000 houses were damaged but, in 1995 a total of 146,000 had already received state funding. Funds were allocated for the rebuilding of the most seriously affected houses in the villages which amounted to 115,121, double the number initially declared destroyed or damaged (69, 140) (Caporale 2004).

Nowadays, there is a widespread sense of injustice among the community and it is believed that state funds were inefficiently managed.

Why? Who did not take responsibility? Could the amount of state money made available have made a difference to the way in which the money was handled? The hypothesis is that if that fewer state funds had been made available, then they would have been put to better use because it would have been easier for local administrations to manage them.

This was a question in the questionnaire and the percentages do not differ much (Figure 3). The majority do not completely agree and 18 per cent have no opinion or did not want to give one. In particular, 21 per cent state that it was not the amount of money that affected the management. In contrast, another 22 per cent agree that it was the money. Thus, two different views emerge. On one hand there are those who think that the high degree of state intervention meant that the reconstruction could take place:



**Figure 3.** If the amount of state funds had been lower, they would have been used in a better way.

*Maybe the sum was too high but it was a good thing... Even if the sum had been split up among the institutional levels, we were able to use the rest to rebuild completely. And if had it been lower?<sup>15</sup>*

On the other hand, people believe that the sum was adequate for the damage caused but that the amount was difficult to manage, and nobody was prepared to do it or had the required abilities.

These events affected the consideration that the inhabitants have for their countrymen: when I asked what the worst flaw of the population was they answered by referring to 1980, to the state funds and the economic and social changes.

Talking about the reconstruction, a 67 year old woman said:

*Nowadays everyone has a house here. Before the disaster we had to make sacrifices to buy one, but the earthquake was a chance for those who had little and for the poor to rebuild bigger houses and divide them up between their sons.*

Again, a 45 year old woman stated:

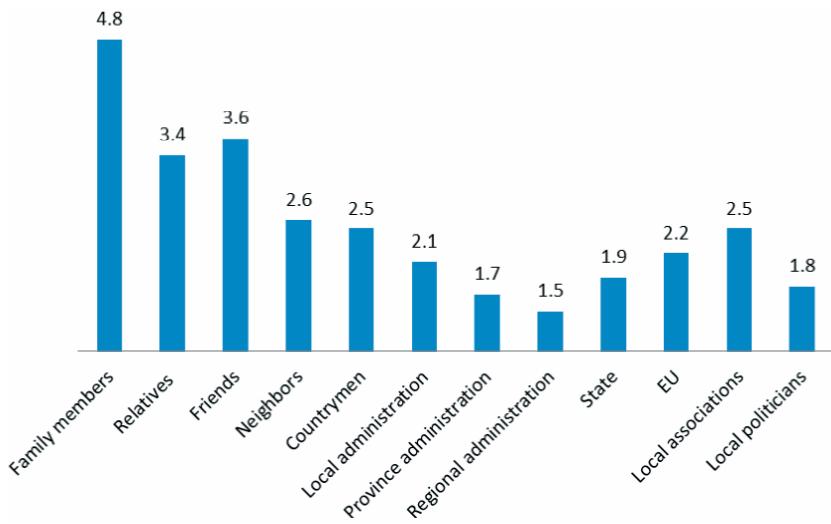
*Sometimes, those who had more because they had sacrificed have lost; those who had less have improved their lot.*

The sense of sacrifice and struggle are often evoked in opposition to the rapid enrichment of others who are believed to have shared clientelistic ties with local administrators. This is linked to illegality and to the monopoly of power the local administrations enjoy by law. We cannot refer to the illegal and immoral behavior occurring during the reconstruction period as corruption; nobody was inferred to have paid a bribe. In those years citizens, and citizens and administrations, connived in order to obtain more. This can be referred to as patronage: a form of power that emerges when the state has partial control of the area and when its officials, acting in its name, use their local power to mediate central requirements and local interests (Gellner 1977).

Another example of injustice that I encountered during my research concerns the order in which moneys were distributed. As I mentioned above, the priority criteria the commission followed in order to assign the funds was based on the chronological order in which the project was presented to local officials but, sometimes this criterion was not respected: people who had no "links" with the commission, often made up of administrators, had to wait longer. Moreover, local people always talk about sacrifice because on a few occasions young people reported to the administration that they lived alone in their own house so that they would have the right to financial support to rebuild their home, when in fact they lived with their parents. This implied a high level of connivance because even if they could not prove that their house had existed, they were able to obtain a new one. Sometimes this property right was sold to those who had none and the buyer paid the real owner (who had already received state support) to rebuild the property. Or else, properties in poor condition were declared to be of historical value in order that more funding could be obtained.

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<sup>15</sup> A 66 year old man, 12 March 2011



**Figure 4.** Perception of trust.

### Personal and institutional trust

Perceptions of trust were also analyzed in the questionnaire: respondents awarded a value from 1 (the minimum) to 5 (the maximum) to express their trust in the categories listed (Figure 4).

We will see that what is expressed on paper is different from what was stated or done.

The nuclear family, as Banfield stated, is the first reference point for the community, especially the younger members (25-34 year olds) because they still receive economic support from their families. Moreover, 90 per cent of the interviewees state that is important to respect the family and dedicate time to it. But there is another important category involving trust.

Friends are the second most important category: according to the majority, friendships that developed during the period spent in prefabricated buildings (10 years on average) while the new houses were being constructed is an important factor. Friendship is also more important than relations with relatives, due to the discontent that arose during the reconstruction and the division of properties.

It is interesting to find that trust in neighbors and in community members is awarded a medium value and that this differs from what was stated during the unstructured interviews. A common remark concerned the disrespectful behavior of the community during the rebuilding period:

*When I rebuilt my house the administration requested one meter of my property in order to make the street larger. My neighbor opposite should have done the same but not only did he not do it, he extended his property by one meter and the street is as it was.<sup>16</sup>*

<sup>16</sup> A 66 year old woman, 23 March 2011.

I define this level of trust not in terms of an actual state but as an expectation: the community would like to trust the community but it is no longer able to do so. These feelings have been generated by national social changes and the new lifestyle in addition to the events of the last 30 years. I cannot describe the past level of trust but I can state that comparisons with a happier past are always mentioned.

Looking at local associations we find that 32 per cent of the interviewees are registered as members but do not take part in social activities; membership is not participation. In fact some associations have ceased their activities because of a lack of interest on the part of the participants. Also in this case, even if people do not participate they recognize the associations' social importance; they are the only institution that can still represent the people's voice. In fact institutional trust is very low. Trust in the European Union is higher thanks to the young people who believe in it and take advantage of its investment programs. On the contrary, trust at the state level (1.9) is higher among people between 55 and 90 years old. The local administration and politicians are awarded a low level (2.0 and 1.9) of trust but the value should be lower still because although the survey was anonymous, I found that there was a conspiracy of silence while the questionnaire was being completed and political activity is almost nonexistent. Regional and provincial administrations attract lower levels of trust; only 25 interviewees out of 360 believe that both can change local social and economic conditions. According to the interviewees when the state funds were received, some were not distributed for the reconstruction. Moreover only 14 per cent entrust the state and the local administration. Local people are looking for funds from the first and places of work from the second. In fact, even though the level of trust is low, the local administration is considered to be a kind of employment agency for short periods or for project collaboration. According to the majority, today as during the reconstruction period, the relationship that links the community to the administration is one of patronage:

*If you wanted your house project approved you couldn't ask an ordinary engineer, it was better to ask a politician's friend. What's more, the administration turned my right into a request for a favor!<sup>17</sup>*

Indeed, although 91 per cent of the interviewees stated that although no employee admits that there is corruption, the interviewees believe that this is simply a nice phrase that does not reflect reality.

Past events influence the present. A climate of patronage discourages any kind of economic and political initiative while perceptions of trust show a difference between what is said and what is done, both affect the development process creating an atomized community.

## Conclusions

According to the latest census, Caposele has an unemployment rate of 17.95 per cent and among the young the rate is higher: 51.72 per cent. In fact, as emerged from the questionnaires, the main problem mentioned by 73 per cent of the interviewees is the lack

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<sup>17</sup> A 67 year old woman, 23 May 2011.

of employment. This difficulty is contained due to paid activities offered by the local government, projects set up by regional volunteer associations and seasonal work on offer in accommodation facilities. As these activities are not part of a local development plan they can be considered a double-edged weapon because on one hand they stop emigration but on the other they deaden the stimulus for development as they are provide some kind of relief.

Moreover, the institutional distrust prevents cooperation over common issues. For example, it is very difficult to create cooperatives as they have been linked to local parties for years and are conceived of as vote-gatherers, established so as to receive state funds without any real development plan. The failure of these past experiences has led to the commonly held belief that this kind of organization should not exist. In 1993, an agronomist tried to involve local farmers in establishing a cooperative in order to transform and commercialize local products. It took a year of meetings and debates to persuade people to invest in the project, and to share economic knowledge and the rules of the company. In the end collaboration did occur but, at the same time, the farmers asked the agronomist to share the risk of putting up capital stock. The next important aspect they needed to learn was the importance of democratic behavior and collaboration among members – something they had lost during the reconstruction period. Today, thanks to the engagement of the farmers' wives and the technical and professional support of the agronomist, the company has 27 members and is a place of work for their sons.

This positive example shows how trust could only be built at the interpersonal level and that the long lasting reconstruction and the rapid economic changes affected the stability of the social actors and caused a decrease in trust.

The analysis presented highlights the negative effects on a community after an important state intervention. To sum up, first of all the amount of money influenced the collective behavior of local people. Law no. 219 on reconstruction enabled citizens to manage the sum directly and they acted on an individual basis. The money distributed also favored new independence, independence of action and no need for cooperation.

Moreover, reconstruction created new social classes, new groups of rich and poor, and changed the identity of the community. This is another element that threatened the perception of trust: the stability of the natural and social order and the confirmation of the validity of rules are key factors of the systemic trust (Garfinkel 1963).

Also, the intervention put the local administration in a monopolistic management role, which resulted in patronage. In addition, the amount received was higher than the budget they were used to managing at the local level and this presented difficulties for them. A lack of skills in this area led to inefficient use of the money.

Another unproductive outcome was that one of the investments in the industrial area that was not linked to the local conditions on the ground failed. As we have seen, when the state interferes in the local economy in order to improve local conditions and achieve a higher level of economic equality, it can have the opposite effect. In this case the result is the decrease of the level of trust to such a point that it cannot be a binding force in society.

I have stated that interpersonal trust is an expectation, a feeling that citizens would like to share again, as before the disaster; while in fact 34.5 per cent of the interviewees denounce the lack of cooperation among citizens a half believes that only civic engagement can change the present situation. This seems to be the only way forward for a community that has no

trust in local and national administrations, due to the fact that the system is perceived by the citizens as being one of patronage and because of the failure of the government intervention.

The community that saw an opportunity for local development in the national intervention has lost more than it had in the first place.

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