Housing Policy in Italy: An In-depth Look and a Comparative Study

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Topics in Italian Studies

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Senior Thesis

Why this topic?

- A way to find a connection between two fields of study: Italian Studies and Public Policy & Law.
- Housing policy in particular is often times overlooked, despite the importance it truly has when it comes to creating policy.

Questions that will be answered…

- Why did it take Italy so long in comparison to other nations to create a successful housing policy?
- What changes that occurred throughout Italy impacted its ability to create housing policy?
- How can we compare Italy to other nations such as the United States in regard to housing policy?

Sources

- I used sources in English from Google Scholar and other relevant data bases to complete my study.
- I combine empirical evidence along with quantitative evidence using data, charts, and tables to reiterate my arguments.

Examples of Data

Table 3. Employment and unemployment rates in Italy by gender and macro-region, year 2010 (%)

	North	Centre	South	Italy
EMPLOYMENT RATE (15-64 YEARS)				
Male	73,8	71,4	57,6	67,7
Female	56,1	51,8	30,5	46,1
Total	65,0	61,5	43,9	56,9
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE				
Male	5,1	6,6	12,0	7,6
Female	7,0	9,0	15,8	9,7
Total	5,9	7,6	13,4	8,4

Source: Istat, 2011

Tab.1

Housing indicators in Italy

	1881	1931	1951	1971	2000*
	(000)	*Index (1881=100)*			
Population	29.791	138	159	178	193
Households	6.620	141	178	241	320
Occupied dw.	6.136	148	166	249	343
Non-occ.	737	81	89	289	746
Dwellings	6.873	141	175	254	387

Source: Istat, National Censuses

Note: The overall dwelling figures include second homes and vacant units.

* Estimates

Comparative Study of a village in Sicily vs. Elizabeth Street in New York

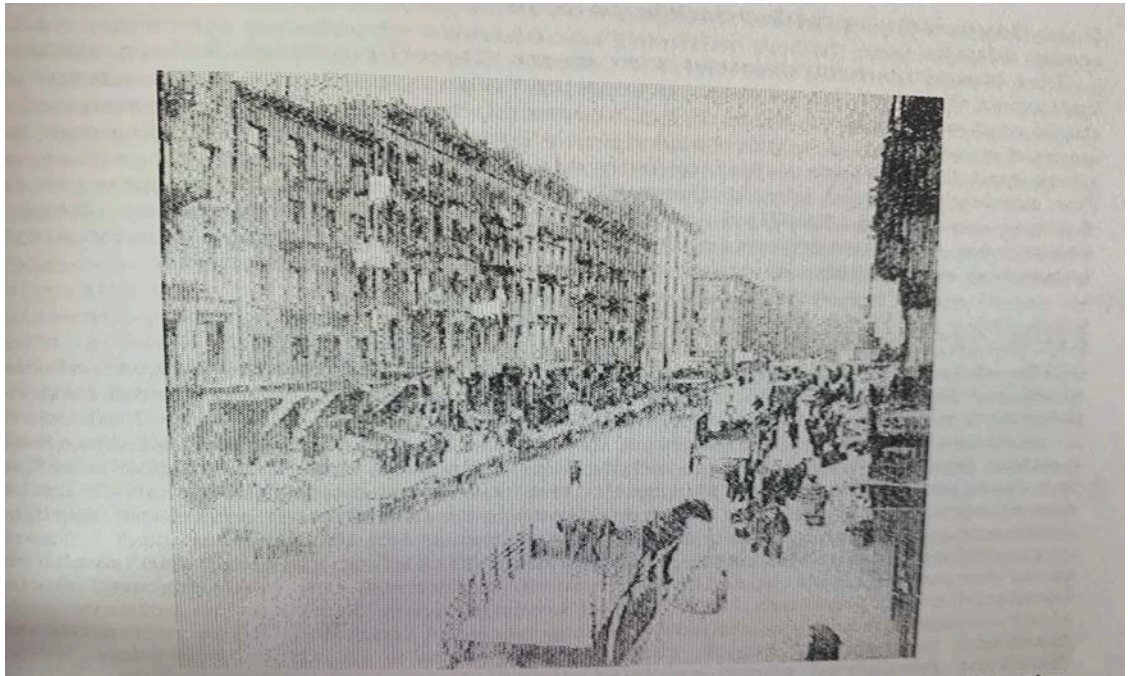

Figure I–2. Elizabeth Street. (Lindsay Denison, "The Black Hand," *Everybody's Magazine* 19 (1908): 294. "Here were myriads of human beings, stifling in boxes arranged like drawers in a bureau, with holes to look out upon the opposite boxes and the roaring 'elevated.' Those who were at home hung out of the windows in as few garments as were decent; while the long seething bare canons of brick, paving stone and asphalt were swarming with children in quest of air and amusement . . . . Hardly a tree or any green thing was to be seen—except in the far eastward vista. (Richard Watson Gilder, "The Housing Problem—America's Need of Awakening," *The American City* 1 (1909): 34.)

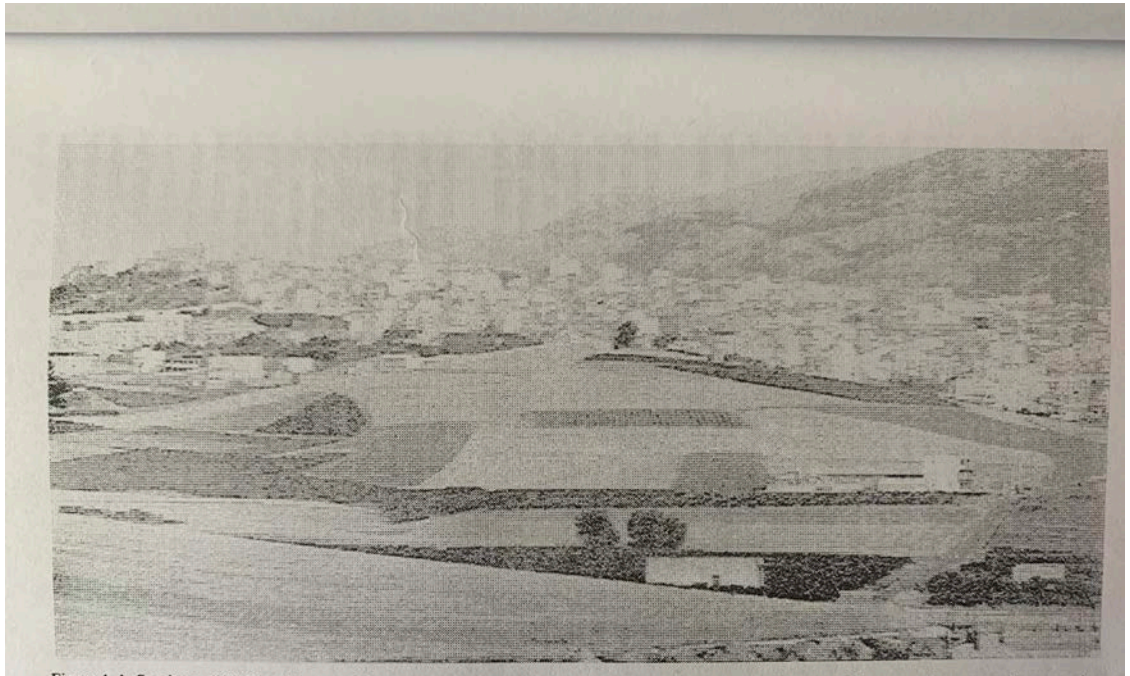

Figure 1–1. Sambuca di Sicilia. "Approaching the city, however, the scene changes; . . . from the distance of about a mile, more or less according to the importance of the city, the traveller finds himself in the middle of an oasis of olives, almonds, grape vines, prickly pears, and, below, in the bottom of the valley, he sees the dark green leaves of the citrus gardens. Entering the city—here there are almost no villages—he must pass the long streets of low houses, each made up of a single ground-floor room, each pressed up against the next, without windows and with only a single entryway. . . . These are the houses of peasants." (Sidney Sonnino, *I Contadini in Sicilia*, Inchiesta in Sicilia, vol. 2 (Florence: Valecchi, 1974), p. 11).

Conclusion

Housing policy is a necessary implementation in any nation in order to have a well-functioning society.

Italy was an interesting case to look at because of its history as a country.

Demographic and population changes	Large changes in employment rates	A fluctuating economy	Vast differences between Northern and Southern regions